

A
C O R D I A L
F O R
L O W S P I R I T S.

B E I N G A
C O L L E C T I O N of curious TRACTS.
By THOMAS GORDON, Esq;
Author of the INDEPENDENT WHIG : and other
Writers.

— But in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers; grievous wolves!
Who all the sacred mysteries of heav'n
To their own vile advantages shall turn,
Of lucre and ambition; and the truth
With superstitions, and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure.

MILTON.

V O L U M E T H E T H I R D .

L O N D O N :

Printed for Messrs. WILSON and FELL, at the
Angel , in Pater-noster-Row. MDCCLXIII.

CORDIAL



LOW PRICES

BEING A

Collection of curious Tracts.

By THOMAS CORBET, Esq.

Author of the Independent Whig; and other
Writings.

— But in their town, as they themselves
Have said, for us to read, given us
To be all the more ready of hand
To turn even our own words to scorn
Of love and ambition; and the truth
Whispered, and tradition told,
Left only in their written words.
MILTON.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

LONDON:

Printed for M. Wilson and T. Wilson, at the
Right, in Pall-mall, near St. James's.



TO
George Poplewell, *Esq*;
OF
East-Retford in Nottinghamshire.

S I R,

AS you are a lover of truth and liberty, and a foe to priestcraft and spiritual tyranny, I beg leave to inscribe this volume to your name. Having no views selfish or personal, I am under no temptation

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to flatter you : nor am I so vain as to think, that this dedication can do you any honour. It will, probably, expose you to the same censures which the editor himself has long suffered ; the censures of the ignorant, the bigot, the hypocrite, and the priest. But you and I, Sir, God be thanked ! have both learned to despise these things, and to pity the authors of them. To that just zeal which I have often heard you express for civil liberty, you have likewise added a noble zeal for that which is religious. After having acquired a plentiful fortune by honest industry, you still continue to associate with those only who are the friends of liberty ; nor are you ashamed to countenance and encourage those that dissent from the *established church*. And indeed it is quite inconsistent with all

DEDICATION. v

just notions of civil liberty, to be indifferent about religious shackles and the impositions of priests. Oppression in matters of religion, and ecclesiastical tyranny, ever made way for, and will eternally introduce, civil bondage, and the tyranny of princes : and in our own history more especially it appears, that civil and religious oppression rise and fall together.

I congratulate you upon that noble spirit which of late years hath appeared in this nation ; a spirit of free enquiry, and careful search after truth : The consequences of it will, we hope, be happy and glorious to our country.

That God Almighty may long preserve your life ; and as you increase in years, that you may advance in wisdom

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dom and goodness; and be eternally happy hereafter in the kingdom of the righteous, is the sincere wish and hearty prayer of,

S I R,

Your Obedient,

Humble Servant,

London,
January 30,
1750.

Richard Baron.

THE



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THE

to
holy
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THE
T R I A L
O F
William Whiston, *Clerc,*
For DEFAMING and DENYING the
HOLY TRINITY;
BEFORE THE
Lord Chief Justice REASON.
FROM THE
Last EDITION, printed in the Year 1740:

Vol. III.

B

T R I A L



William W. Allen

For Decisions and Decisions etc

HOLY TRINITY

BY

Lord Chief Justice R. A. L. Allen

FROM THE

Last Edition, printed in the Year 1840

Vol. III



THE
T R I A L

OF
William Whiston, Clerc.

Clerk of the Ar- **C R Y E R,** call over the
raigns. jury.

Cryer.

Alexander Macraigh, Esq;	}	Irish Jesuits.
Patrick Oneal, Esq;		
Macdonal Oconnor, Esq;		
Shenkin ap Thomas,	}	Welch Nonjurors.
Robert ap Reese,		
Owen ap Tudor,		
Archibald Mackintosh,	}	Scotch Rebels.
Tory Cornegy,		
Duncan Kinlough, Esq;		
James Guthrie, Clerc, chaplain to the thieves in Newgate.		

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His grace Roger Gaynham, archbishop of the Hundreds of Drury.

Signior Cazzo, his holiness's pimp.

Clerk of the Arraignment. Sir, if you have a mind to challenge any of the jury, you must do it as they come to be sworn.

Mr. Whiston. My lord, I except against them all; and I defy the whole Roman conclave to produce a knot of greater villains. I am sure the jury must be packed; for is it possible to imagine, that three Irish jesuits, three Welch non-jurors, three Scotch rebels, the chaplain of Newgate, and the pope's pimp, should all meet by chance?

Judge. Take care, Sir, how you throw the least slur upon the sacred character of the gown; but that you may not have the least pretence to charge me with partiality, I will enquire into it; though I think it scarce possible that men, so zealous in support of the church, and so rigid and scrupulous in points of faith, can be guilty of so foul an action.

Judge. Who gave you in the names of this jury, Mr. Sheriff?

Sheriff. The reverend Dr. Codex.

Judge. This is the most scandalous proceeding that ever was heard of in a court of justice. Sir, it little becomes a man of your sacred function, to be packing of juries. Let me have no more
of

of those diabolical, inquisitorial arts ; for the honesty of a layman will not bear it. Call another jury, and take particular care, that no parson creeps into it.

The new jury being sworn, the clerk reads the indictment as follows :

William Whiston, Cleric, you stand charged with having maintained, propagated, and published most horrid, damnable and blasphemous tenets against the doctrine, worship, and majesty of the blessed Trinity ; expressly contradicting the Nicene creed, and defaming the whole Athanasian ; impiously asserting them to be the inventions of priests, to pervert and confound the understandings of mankind. This is what you are to answer, and God send you a good deliverance.

Mr. Solicitor General Codex. My lord, heaven is my witness, with how much sorrow and reluctance I appear this day, to make good so dreadful a charge, against this our unfortunate, apostate brother ; but when our holy religion is concerned, and our church is in danger, compassion would be impious, and humanity a crime ; for experience daily teaches us that lenity and tenderness would prove our ruin. And surely, if ever there was a case that cried out for rigorous justice, it is certainly this before us ; which is no less than robbing the church of one of its most valuable mysteries ; and the deity itself, of two thirds of its dignity and power : for it is

to this sacred mystery, that mankind made the first sacrifice of their understandings; to this we owe the implicit faith of the laity, our own wealth, dignities, and power; and to this alone we owe the spiritual monarchy of the church. Oh thou inexplicable *Three-one*! thou wondrous Son! subject, yet equal; generated though eternal! and thou most Holy Spirit, inconceivably distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet the same with both! there stands the wretch that would destroy the God that was made man, to redeem him; and denies that God which came down to sanctify him! can a christian hear this without horror, or a priest forbear to tear his heart out! amazing mystery! for though God can be seen by no man, yet God the Son has appeared at sundry times to the patriarchs and the prophets, and condescended to be born of a virgin, and to live in the man Jesus, distinct from the Father, yet one God. These are the divine truths this execrable monster has denied, and for which I hope to see him suffer the most exquisite tortures the zeal of churchmen can invent. And now, my lord, I shall beg leave to call in the witnesses to prove the fact.

Judge. Who would you call in first?

Mr. Sollicitor. Call in Dr. Trapp.

Mr. Sollicitor. I desire, Sir, that you would inform the court what you have heard the prisoner say concerning the ever-blessed Trinity.

Dr.

Dr. Trapp. My lord, he had the insolence to tell me to my face, that it was the most impudent piece of nonsense that ever was imposed upon mankind; and that they who compel us to receive it, are the most inhuman of tyrants.

Mr. Solicitor. Did you hear him say nothing else?

Dr. Trapp. No, Sir; for I immediately knocked him down, and raised the mob upon him, in hopes that he would have been tore to pieces.

Court. Call in Dr. Waterland.

Mr. Solicitor. What discourse have you had with the prisoner about the Trinity?

Dr. Waterland. Sir, while the prisoner was orthodox and pure in his faith, no man was more intimate with him, or valued him more than I did; but when I found him examining the scriptures, and reasoning upon mysteries, I profess I was extremely apprehensive, that some great mischief would happen to the church; nor was it long before he broke out into this fatal error. My concern was such, that there is nothing which I would not have done to have saved his immortal soul; I begged him, for his own sake, and for the sake of his innocent brethren, to have pity on a falling church; nay, I assured him of a couple of the fattest livings in the kingdom, if he would but seem to recant: but the vile wretch was so far from being reduced to a christian temper, by this spiritual encouragement,

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that he had the ill manners to tell me, that he would have nothing to do with such a parcel of hypocritical, base rascals; and that the Trinity was nothing but a piece of roguery invented by the church.

Mr. Solicitor. Was that all that passed between ye?

Dr. Waterland. Yes, Sir.

Mr. Solicitor. Did not you knock him down too?

Dr. Waterland. Sir, I happened to be very much weakened with a small running at that time; but had my strength been equal to my indignation, I should have knocked his brains out.

Judge. Have you any more witnesses?

Mr. Solicitor General. Call in Dr. Rogers.

Mr. Solicitor. Pray, Sir, acquaint the court with what you know of the prisoner, in relation to his defaming, ridiculing, or denying the holy Trinity.

Dr. Rogers. Sir, as I and several other orthodox divines, were gravely discoursing upon tithes, fine ale, pluralities, and such like spiritual matters, the prisoner happened to be by; when, on a sudden, there entered a very comely old gentleman, who cried out with an audible voice, The mystery of mysteries unfolded, to the utter confusion of all arians, infidels and heretics; *One is three, and Three are one*, not only made visible,

A CORDIAL for LOW SPIRITS. 9

visible, but even palpable ; for here, gentlemen, you shall not only see it, but feel it. Observe then, here is but one ball ; now, gentlemen, you shall see this one ball send forth two other balls out of itself, as big as itself, and yet not lose one atom of its weight and grandeur. *Hocus Pocus Reverendissimi Spectatores*, the *One* is *Three*. Now, gentlemen, be pleased to observe the miracle reversed. *Pilluli Pilluli* congregate, *presto presto unite* ; *osservate Signori Dottissimi*, the *Three* are *One*. These eyes of mine, my lord, were witnesses of the fact : and upon one of the company's expressing an uncommon satisfaction, and saying, That this ingenious gentleman might be of signal service to the church, this execrable traitor had the impudence to declare, that we juggled with the deity, as this conjurer did with his cups and balls, and that the *blessed Trinity* was only an ecclesiastical *Hocus Pocus* ; which blasphemous insult upon our holy order being sufficiently proved, we have nothing more to do, than to deliver him over to the secular arm, which, I hope, will make such an example of him, as will satisfy the vengeance of an offended church.

Judge. You have heard, Sir, what is laid to your charge ; and now the evidence against you has done, you may make your defence.

Mr. Whiston. My lord, as nothing could be more fortunate to me than this opportunity of de-

fending the truth, before so impartial a judge; so it must be the highest satisfaction to a free people, to see it maintained with that candour and fairness it deserves. Notwithstanding the violent clamours that have been raised against me, your lordship must necessarily see, that my only crime is, that of differing from the rest of my brethren, in a speculative point; but a point of such importance, I must confess, that no less than the tyranny of the priesthood, and the liberty of the laity depend upon it. My cause, my lord, is that of truth, and I hope I shall be allowed the liberty of asking those learned witnesses such questions as will be most likely to discover it, and to set it in the clearest light.

Judge. Sir, you may take your own method in your defence.

Mr. Whiston. I desire then to know of the ingenious Dr. Trapp, whether the divine essence can be separated from any of the persons in the Trinity?

Dr. Trapp. We hold, that it cannot.

Mr. Whiston. Then I desire to know, whether the second person was sent with the divine essence, or without it?

Dr. Trapp. We maintain, that it was sent with it.

Mr. Whiston. Sir, I desire that you would inform the court, whether you can conceive it possible for any being to be sent, and at the same time

time not to be distinct and separate from the being that sends it?

Dr. Trapp. God damn him! (*aside.*) My Lord, I beg leave to observe, that this is a sophistical and ensnaring question, and does not admit of a direct and categorical answer; for we say, that although the divine essence is in its own nature inseparable, it must necessarily be the same essence, said to be sent indeed, but not sent, according to human conception of sending; but sent in an ineffable manner, agreeable to the nature of God, but inconceivable to men; and it is that makes the mystery, which is nothing else but the inconceivableness of the manner, wrapped up in the revelation of the fact: and in the implicit and hearty belief of your inconceivableness, lies the true secret of a meritorious and saving faith; and this is the true doctrine of the church.

Mr. Whiston. The true doctrine of the church then is, that perfect unity and real separation are compatible in the same subject, and at the same time!—But, to proceed;—I beg the learned Doctor would inform the court, to what intent and purpose the second person in the Trinity was inseparably united to the man Jesus, since it never gave the man Jesus the least assistance in any one act; for he attributes every virtue and power to the Father which is in heaven?

Dr. Trapp. As nothing can be a greater insult upon the divine Majesty, than to censure his conduct, and to call his wisdom in question; so nothing can be more incumbent upon his vicegerents, than to support his dignity, and to justify his ways with men. Was it not infinite goodness in the almighty to live among us, to be a witness to all our wants, to overlook the man Jesus, to give a private account to the Father of what passed, and to hinder him from doing any harm, though he did not afford him the least assistance to do any good? Such actions as these, Sir, may be highly expedient in the trine-œconomy, perfectly agreeable to the distinct operation of harmonic union, and absolutely necessary to the execution of the wonderful scheme.

Mr. Whiston. Since you have given so curious an account of the nature and offices of the deity, and seem to be so intimately acquainted with his secrets, pray, what do you think of the devil's hurrying the Almighty into the wilderness, then tossing him upon the pinnacle of a temple, and, lastly, of his having the assurance to bid him fall down and worship him? Now, Sir, according to your principles, the very story itself is incredible; for his excellency, the devil, seems to fall as short of the high opinion the church has of his cunning, in not knowing whom he had to deal with, as he surpasses the limits they have set to his power, by his ruling the Omnipotent. You hear

hear my objection, Sir, and I beg the favour of you to answer it to the court.

Dr. Trapp. That *Christ* was carried by the evil spirit into the Wilderness, the holy scriptures do indeed declare *; but then he was carried as man, not as God. God, indeed, for wise purposes, permitted the man *Jesus* to be hurried away, and to be tempted, and attended him as a witness of his virtue. For I beg your Lordship to observe, that, although the divine nature was inseparable from the human, the divine nature might give the devil leave to run away with the human, and at the same time voluntarily accompany it; so that the divine nature might act with the utmost freedom, while the human was driven by compulsion. And, as to the other difficulty, it is but supposing the divinity's being *incognito*; and then, how could the devil know a word of his being there? and, consequently, does not deserve the invidious reflections this gentleman is pleased to throw upon him.

Mr. Whiston. Since the Doctor has resolved the last difficulty with such extraordinary subtlety, and has brought off the devil so ingeniously, I must beg the favour of him to explain one knotty point more, and so proceed to the

* The reader is most earnestly recommended to an *Essay on Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness*, by Mr. Farmer: printed for *Wauob and Whiston*, 1761, which cannot fail of giving him great satisfaction on the subject.

examining my witnesses. I desire him therefore to declare, whether he thinks the supreme God deficient in knowledge ; and whether *Christ* has not expressly declared the second and third person in the Trinity to be deficient in knowledge, by positively affirming, that the first person only, which is the Father, knows the day of judgment ?

Dr. Trapp. That there is such an expression in holy writ, the church does not deny ; and is also so fair and candid as to admit, that, according to the common acceptation of words, and the most regular process of human reasoning, the Son and Holy Ghost are absolutely excluded, by that knowledge being confined to the Father only : But then she says, that the person being inseparable from the essence, and the Father knowing by his essence, and not by his person, the Son being acknowledged by the church to be of the same essence, he must, in respect to his essence, necessarily have the same knowledge, though he had not in any other respect ; for the attributes being the same, the powers will be the same also. Though the church does hold some tenets indeed, which are of a pretty hard digestion ; yet gentlemen will find themselves prodigiously mistaken, if they think she wants arguments for her defence.

Mr. Whiston. If the Doctor calls this arguing, he may go on indeed till dooms-day ; and, as he
has

has given your Lordship a sufficient specimen of his ridiculous trifling and solemn nonsense, that I may not provoke him to trouble your Lordship with any more of it, I will beg leave to call in my witnesses, that you may hear what they have to say in my defence.

Dr. Trapp. Solemn nonsense, you dog ! My Lord, such usage is not to be bore. Shall men of my sublime character be used thus ? Shall the representatives of God, and the fellow-labourers of Christ, who have a power superior to angels and archangels, be exposed to the scoffs and insults of libertines and deists ? If I cannot have justice from the court, I will have it from the people. *Fire ; murder ; the church is in danger ; down with the heretics ;* tear them to pieces ; beat their brains out ; knock —

Judge. I would have you consider, Sir, that you are not at Oxford, or in convocation, but before an impartial court of justice, which is the guardian of our liberties ; which will maintain its authority, and commands decency and respect. And let me tell you, Sir, the people are not to be moved by the bellowing of a priest ; for they know you too well, to be your tools any longer.

Dr. Trapp. I little expected, that a man of my dignity and order should have been brow-beaten, for using a pestiferous heretic as he deserves. Heresies, my Lord, are of too virulent, obstinate,

obstinate, and exuberant a nature, to be exterminated by disputes. Such plagues are to be cured by nothing but fire and sword ; for, believe me, my Lord, the unity and peace of a church depends upon its power : nor will it ever be safe and happy, till we can crush the malignant, cruciate the obstinate, and cut off the rebellious from the face of the earth ; and —

Judge. Sir, you must not disturb the court with your seditious harangues : Let the prisoner proceed to call his witnesses.

Mr. Solicitor-General Codex. As there is a fresh evidence just arrived, we must beg your Lordship's indulgence a little longer ; for *Mr. Shynkin ap Rees*, a Welch divine, being this moment come into court, he hopes he shall not be denied the liberty of offering his testimony and reasons against the prisoner, and the heretical dogma which is now to be tried before you.

Judge. *Mr. Shynkin ap Rees*, the court is very willing to hear what you have to offer.

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. My Lord, and you gentlemen of the jury ; as there was a great clamours and reports in my country, that there were great assaults making upon our holy religion in London, hur dit come in great haste up to town, to fight for hur church.

Judge. Sir, you have shewn a very laudable zeal ; but I must observe to you, that the proper and natural defence of a church, that is attacked

tacked by arguments, is reason, and not arms; and the only thing that is incumbent upon you here, is to inform the court of what you know in relation to Mr. William Whiston's denying or defaming the blessed Trinity.

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. My goot Lort, that hur shall do in fery few words. He is a fery great rogue, and deserves to be hanged, for having lain siolent hands upon our dear mother the church; and he is so fery wicked, as to lay his axe at the root of a great mystery: and if he be allowed to go on, the choicest piece of our holy religion will be cut off; and, indeed, my good Lort, I must tell you, that he has struck such a terror into the clergy of our parts, that he has frightened the goot bishop and canons of St. Dafit's out of their wits.

Judge. Sir, did you ever hear Mr. Whiston say any thing in derogation or contempt of the ever-blessed Trinity?

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. What! I hear him say any thing, my Lort? I scorn to be seen with such a scrups: there is not a poor curate in all Wales would keep such a fillain company.

Mr. Whiston. My Lord, since I perceive that this British divine knows nothing of me, but what he has heard in a barber's shop or an ale-house, I should be glad to hear what he can say in behalf of the favourite mystery he is so ready

to fight for, and to know how he came acquainted with it.

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. My Lort, that is a fery easy thing; that is a fery easy thing, my goot Lort: hur sucked it in with hur mother's milk; hur faith strengthened as hur grew up, and was daily increased with good ale and metheglin, and the wise instructions of Mr. Davit Shones, our worthy parson of Kerig y Druydion.

Mr. Whiston. Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask you what notion you have of your Trinity?

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. Why my notion is, that there is one Father, and one Son, and one Holy Ghost, who is both their sons; and that they will make one very good God between them all.

Mr. Whiston. But, with submission, Sir, according to your account, there are two Fathers and two Sons; for the Son is Father to the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. Sir, you are an impudent fellow, to say that I do make two Fathers and two Sons: Do I make any more than the church makes? Sir, I will live and die by the church; and if the church says there is but one, he is a fillain that says there are two.

Mr. Whiston. Sir, since I find you begin to grow hot, I shall urge you no more upon this point, but go on to the next. You are pleased to

to tell me, Sir, that your oracle the church says, that the Father is God, and that the Son is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God; and that these three are not three Gods, but one God. You acknowledge also, that the Father is a person, that the Son is a person, and that the Holy Ghost is a person; the consequence of which is, that since a distinct person is inseparably annexed to each of the three God-heads; if there be but one God, and not three Gods, there will necessarily be but one person, and not three persons: nor can their glory be equal, or they co-eternal: not equal, for it is the same, which equals never are; nor co-eternal; for how can they be co-eternal, if not distinct: Do we say, that a thing is co-eternal or co-temporary with itself? I desire to know, Sir, what you have to say to this?

Mr. Sbynkin ap Rees. You desire to know what I have to say to it! Why I say, Sir, that I never heard any thing of it before; and that I do verily believe, that it is a great lye: and that it was but one person in the Greek; and I do not doubt, but the church will tell you so too, if there be occasion for it: and as for your nonsense about your equals and your co-eternals, indeet, I shall not trouble my head about them.

Mr. Whiston. Will you be pleased then to give me leave to proceed to another question?

Mr.

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. Is, indeed, with all my heart, Sir.

Mr. Whiston, I desire to know what opinion you have of the devil's parts, and whether you do not take him to be a very subtle spirit?

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. He is a fery cunning prince, indeet.

Mr. Whiston. Do you think he could distinguish a God from a Man?

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. Oh yes, Got knows; for dit he not find out Jesus the son of Dafit, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam, the son of God, without being told, when he drove him out of the possessed man, and sent him into the herd of swine?

Mr. Whiston. It was cleverly done, I must confess; and it must be owned was a very notable proof of his parts. But, Mr. Shynkin, if Christ had been God, how comes it that he did not find out that too, when he tempted him in the wilderness? And if he had power enough to carry him up to the top of a mountain, and to set him upon the pinnacle of the temple; how is it possible to conceive that he should not have had penetration enough to find out who that person was, over whom he had so much power?

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees, (Aside.) By Got, this is a clincher, indeet: Dear Doctor Waterland, help
hur

hur to some quibble now, or hur shall disgrace hur cloth and family for ever.

Mr. Whiston. I must beg your Lordship to take notice of the candour and integrity of this worthy witness ; for the very last words he uttered, were to ask a reverend divine to help him to a quibble, in order to impose upon the court.

Mr. Shynkin ap Rees. Sure, my Lort, it is no treason, for one reverend divine to help another to a quibble. But, suppose that the devil was cheated, what was that to me, my goot Lort ? He might be a very foolish young devil, for aught that I know, that was but just come into the world, and had never heard, that God Almighty had made himself a man of flesh and bones, like one of us.

Judge. Mr. Shynkin ap Rees, your base and pitiful design to impose upon the court, is of too pernicious a nature to be passed by in silence. The clergy, Sir, may make as light as they please of sophistry and false glosses : they, indeed, may encourage them and applaud them, but men of honour will ever detest and abhor them. Let me have no more of your ecclesiastical pious frauds ; for here, at least, I expect that you should shew a proper regard to decency and truth.

Dr. Waterland. My lord, I must confess, I am not a little concerned to see an ambassador of
Christ

Christ have recourse to so mean a shift: but to let the world see that our holy church scorns a quibble, as much as she does a lie; and that Athanasian verity does not stand in need of such feeble supports, she answers thus: the all-wise creator, purposing within himself to put the prince of darkness to shame, condescended to be his companion for a time; and that he might the more effectually baffle him, he divested him of his natural penetration, tho' not of his power, during the whole course of his temptation; and sent him away with the mortification of being bubbled for forty days together; which must certainly have been a very considerable discouragement to him in all his future attempts.

Judge. Since I find that this British divine has discovered nothing to us but an immoderate constitutional zeal, an excessive eagerness to fight for his good ale and metheglin, I think we should lose no more time, but proceed to call in the witnesses.

Mr. Whiston. My Lord, as the best justification I can possibly make for my contempt of this solemn ecclesiastical riddle of a Trinity, must be by proving it to be utterly false; so the best reason that it is possible to give for abolishing it, will be to shew how detrimental it is to Christianity itself: and, in order to make it evident that it is so, I must beg leave to call in such Witnesses as are necessary to prove it; and, though I could
have

have the testimony of the Jewish, the Mahometan, and Gentile world, I shall trouble the court with no more than one, who will be a sufficient representative of all the rest.

Judge. Who will you be pleased to call, Sir?

Mr. Whiston. I would call in Mustapha Ben Hamet, a Turk.

Dr. Trapp. If Turks, my Lord, are to be admitted as evidence against the church, Christianity may as well give up its cause. And if our wealth and dignities are to depend upon the depositions of Turks and Infidels, better had it been for us that we had professed any thing rather than Christ. Shall a Christian court give credit to such monsters as deny the Lord! This is so flagrant a piece of cruelty and injustice, that, G—d——n me, Christian patience is not sufficient to bear it. And if reason has the presumption openly to declare against us, we must have recourse to authority to suppress its insolence.

Judge. Reason, Sir, declares for nothing but truth; and I must observe to you, that if any sort of testimony ought to be rejected before it is heard, it should be the testimony of those who will be most affected by the issue of the dispute. Are Turks as much concerned in this affair as dignitaries? Have ye made no scruple to produce the Doctors of your own church, as witnesses

nesses in your own cause, and are ye so extremely delicate, that you will not admit of a person that is intirely neuter? As I have no reason, therefore, to suspect that this witness will be guided by any thing but truth, it is but just and fit that he should be heard.

Mr. Whiston. I desire, Mr. Mustapha, that you would give the court an account of the reasons that hindered you and many thousands more from embracing the Christian religion, when you were solicited to it by certain missionaries in the east.

Mr. Mustapha. My Lord, upon my happening to be acquainted with some Christian missionaries at Pequín in China, they not only expressed the tenderest affection for my person, but seemed to be under the utmost concern for the good of my soul; giving me the strongest assurances of immortal joys, upon my receiving the true and orthodox faith: But declared, that whilst I continued ignorant of certain important doctrines, it would be impossible for me to be saved. And that, out of the particular regard they had for me, they would let me into the mystery of mysteries at once, which, as near as I can remember, was as follows, viz. That the great God of heaven had a Son, who was the same God as himself, and yet distinct from himself; and that there was a God, the Holy Ghost, who proceeded from the Father and the Son, who was distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet was the same God

as the Father and the Son: So that this Holy Ghost was both Father and Son, and yet was neither Father nor Son: And that the Father was both Son and Holy Ghost, and yet was neither Son nor Holy Ghost: And that the Son was both Father and Holy Ghost, and yet was neither Father nor Holy Ghost. This they pronounce to be the most amazing and stupendous object for the right and meritorious exercise of our Faith: In short, that the most mysterious of mysteries was, that every one of them, by *Hypostatic Union*, should be *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*; and yet, by ecclesiastic determination, there should be but one *Father*, and one *Son*, and one *Holy Ghost*. They told me also, that about seventeen hundred and forty years ago, that God was extremely angry; and that he had made himself a man; and that he had sent himself into this world; and that he died to appease himself; and that about three days after he had been dead, that he rose again, and went back to heaven, and sat upon his own right hand, where he still continues incessantly soliciting himself. This they assured me, was the *faith of a Christian*; and that whosoever did not believe thus of the Trinity, (as they call it) must *perish everlastingly*. This, my lord, was the mystery of mysteries, which was proposed to me, by those worthy missionaries, as necessary to my salvation; which is so nonsensical, blasphemous, and absurd, that I am not able to repeat it, without the

utmost horror and detestation: And I do most solemnly aver, that the monstrous notions, which these execrable hypocrites have endeavoured to propagate of the great God of heaven, have given all other sects so just and so strong a prejudice against christianity, that, whilst this doctrine is maintained, it will be impossible for it to make any considerable progress: for I will take upon me to affirm, that of all the sacred impostors who have ever taken advantage of the weakness of mankind, none have ever yet had the impudence to promulge such absurd and monstrous notions of the deity.

Mr. Whiston. Having given your lordship a sufficient proof, of part of the infinite mischiefs which this monstrous doctrine is attended with; I shall proceed to shew you, that it is not only contrary to the tenor of the scriptures in general, but that it is diametrically contrary to the sense of every one of the sacred penmen in particular; and produce their own irrefragable testimony in support of what I assert.

Judge. What witness would you call in next?

Mr. Whiston. Call in Peter the apostle.

Judge. What question would you ask him?

Mr. Whiston. I desire he may be asked, What he thinks of the doctrine of the Trinity?

Judge. You hear the question, Mr. Peter.

Peter

Peter the apostle. I do, my Lord; but as I never heard the word before this moment, I protest I cannot guess what it means.

Judge. Mr. Whiston, you have put the question in too general a manner: you should have opened it a little, and explained the point in dispute.

Mr. Whiston. I must beg to be excused, my Lord; for it is not my business to explain my adversary's doctrine: besides, I am not really able to do it.

Judge. Dr. Trap, you must explain your Trinity: the witness here does not know what to make of it.

Dr. Trap. The Trinity, Sir, is the sublimest mystery in the christian dispensation, the touchstone of an orthodox faith, and one of the greatest essentials toward the obtaining of everlasting life. It is a doctrine collected out of the sacred scriptures, by our holy mother the church, which has appointed us to tell the people, that there is one God the Father, and one God the Son, and one God the Holy Ghost; but that these three are not three Gods, but one God: that the Son is neither made nor created, but begotten; and that the Holy Ghost is neither made, nor begotten, but proceeds. Or thus, Sir, the Father is the supreme God, and Jesus Christ is the supreme God, but not the same supreme God that the Father is; and the Holy

Ghost is the supreme God, but not the same supreme God that the Father is, or that Jesus Christ is; and that notwithstanding they are not the same supreme God, yet they are not the supreme Gods. And in this Trinity none is afore or after the other; but the Son is begotten by an eternal generation; and, though eternally generating, has been generated from all eternity. Likewise the Holy Ghost is by eternal procession, eternally proceeding, yet almighty from all eternity. This is trinity in unity, and unity in trinity; three in one, and one in three; not three, but one; nor one, but three. The first is first, the second is from the first, and the third is from the second and the first. The first is not before the second, nor the second before the third: But the first is first; the second is first; and the third is first; neither confounding nor dividing, one and three, or three and one. Now this is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he shall perish everlastingly. This is all, Sir; which, to be sure, you know as well as we, tho' you did not reduce it to a regular system, and make it one of the articles of your *Credenda*; which, for very wise ends, the church has prudently done since. In short, Sir, you have nothing to do but to tell the court, that you are of the same opinion with the church; and at the same time you will establish your own character, and our authority.

Peter.

Peter. I am so far from being of your opinion, that, I profess, I don't understand you.

Dr. Trapp. Not understand me ! why nothing is plainer: you are to believe no more than this, that there are three persons and one God, and that every person is very God.

Peter. So you only modestly desire me to believe that there are four Gods.

Dr. Trapp. Sir, you intirely mistake the matter ; for tho' every person is God, yet every person is not a particular God ; for they all subsist in the same essence, which constitutes the unity ; and the trine-personality, subsisting in the unity, constitutes the Trinity. Sir, this is so clear and easy, that we do not scruple to teach it our women and children.

Peter. Tho' your women and children are so easily satisfied, I must be much better instructed, before I can be satisfied ; wherefore I shall take the liberty of desiring you to explain what you mean by person and essence ?

Dr. Trapp. With all my heart, Sir: Why person, Sir. is a nominal idea of an unsubstantial, uncreated, incomprehensibly begotten, or proceeding subsistence ; purely and simply taken in itself, a non-entity, but really and potentially distinguishing entities. And essence, being an occult, immaterial substance, necessarily containing all those accidents, without which it could not possibly subsist, the person subsisting in the essence, dialectically

cally and logically speaking, may be said to be the accident of the substance, differing in name and nature indeed, tho' co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal. *Wer't thou a teacher in Israel, and knowest not these things?*

Peter. Is that to be wondered at, if these things have been invented since I was a teacher? For the people in my time had too much sense to be the inventors of such unintelligible stuff, and too much honesty to suffer it; but thy tribe, &c.

Judge. Gentlemen, it will be impossible to come to a conclusion, unless we put a stop to this senseless, unmeaning jargon of the schools; wherefore, as it is my business to keep you to the point, I will propose the question myself.

Dr. Codex. With humble submission, my Lord, as the prisoner stands indicted for blasphemy against the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, as explained by the Rev. Dr. Trapp, I insist upon it, that the witness's evidence must speak directly to that; and must declare to the court, whether he thinks Trapp's *Trinity* an orthodox trinity, or not. *Mr. Peter,* pray tell my Lord what you think of Trapp's *Trinity*.

Peter. Though I was bred but a poor fisherman, there is no reason I should be ridiculed, and have a strange jumble of stuff proposed to me, because I was not brought up to learning. How indifferent soever these great doctors may
think

think of my understanding, Christ did not think me unworthy of matters of the greatest importance. I never understood quibbles and riddles, nor do I understand these. When these gentlemen are in earnest, and will ask me any thing that I can make any sense of, I will give them as satisfactory an answer as I am able; for this seems to be nothing but jingling with words. Surely, my Lord, these fellows must be a pack of impudent cheats; for they cannot possibly believe, what they would impose upon the rest of mankind. Have you no laws against such hypocrites?

Dr. Codex. If your Lordship can hear the sacred character of churchmen thus scurrilously treated, I cannot. We are likely indeed to expect justice, when the court is corrupted against the priesthood! It is not the first time that the earth has opened, and fire from heaven has consumed such, &c.

Judge. Jailor take away that mad, persecuting bell-weather, and let us go on with the trial. Mr. Peter, the court has too great a regard for your character, to countenance any ludicrous impositions upon you: And these divines are in earnest, I assure you; for let it appear ever so unintelligible and absurd to you, this is the faith which we must subscribe to, or suffer the most rigorous persecution here, and be devoted by the church to eternal tortures hereafter.

Peter. My surprize, my Lord, is so astonishing, that I must beg a moment's indulgence, till I recover myself---Am I asked, if this creed is apostolical? If the most glaring nonsense, and the most manifest contradictions be apostolical! Is there a man of common sense, common modesty, or common honesty, that could ever have imagined, or promulged, such silly and impious notions of the Deity? Have not all the prophets, evangelists and apostles continually ascribed all might, majesty and power to the Father alone? And has not Christ as often declared to you, that he never did any thing, nor ever could do any thing, without the authority and assistance of the Father? And does not he take hold of every opportunity of ascribing every action to the Father only? Or can any man shew me, where he has given the least hint, that he himself was the supreme God? And since I am called upon for my opinion, upon this occasion, both for the satisfaction of mankind and for my own justification, I will now repeat a part of what I have formerly wrote relating to this subject. In a public assembly at Cæsarea, I spoke thus: "Ye know Jesus of Nazareth, whom God hath anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing those that were possessed by the devil, because God was with him. This person God raised from the dead the third day, and commanded us to preach, and testify to the people, that this very person was
decreed

decreed and determined to be the judge of the living and the dead." Is this describing Christ as the supreme God? Is not here a strong assertion of a power delegated to him from the Father, to enable him to perform those works for which he was sent into the world? Had he been God-man, he could neither have wanted nor received such power. It is absurd, therefore, to suppose it to be sent where it could be of no use. If Christ had been the supreme God, I must have described him in a manner directly contrary to this. Then I must have said, Jesus Christ is God of Gods, he is the omnipotent, has all power originally in himself, and cannot possibly derive it from any other Being.

But how manifestly would this contradict and clash with what went before? Nay, it would not only contradict what I have said of him, but give the lie to every description of him through the whole New Testament. And I do here insist upon it, that the assertions of the Trinitarians, in respect to Christ's divinity, are absolutely incompatible with the descriptions of him in the gospel. Another passage in confirmation of the same principle, is as follows: "We made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; we were witnesses of his majesty, for he received from God honor and glory." I shall not trouble you with any more proofs; but only beg leave to put this last into the form of an argument, as thus: The omnipotent God cannot receive honour

nour and glory: but Jesus Christ did receive honour and glory; therefore Jesus Christ cannot be the omnipotent God: Which proposition, gentlemen, do you deny?

Dr. Trapp. Dost thou imagine that doctors of divinity will have so little regard to their dignity, as to dispute with such an ignorant, beggarly fellow as thou art? What university wert thou bred at? Go to Billingsgate, fellow, and there you will meet with company that will suit you; for deans, spiritual lords and doctors do not use to talk to fishermen.

Peter. I cannot pretend, indeed, to a learned education; but, in recompence, I was bred at the fountain-head of humility, mercy, justice, and every virtue, that can render men happier or better; and shall not envy even real acquisitions, that are accompanied with vanity and insolence.

Judge. Have you done with the witness?

Mr. Whiston. Yes, my Lord.

Judge. Who would you call next?

Mr. Whiston. Paul the apostle of Tarsus.

Judge. What would you ask of Paul?

Mr. Whiston. I would have asked him the same question that was put to Peter, if I were not thoroughly persuaded I should have a repetition of the same answer. Wherefore I shall only ask him, whether he believes Jesus Christ to be the supreme God? And what was the doctrine he taught, concerning his nature, office, and being?

Paul

Paul. When I endeavoured to convert the Jews and the Gentiles, I always spoke of our Saviour in the clearest and most intelligible manner I was able; nor can I conceive, that any thing I either said or wrote, could give the least handle for any one to imagine, that I believed Jesus Christ to be the supreme God; for, almost in the beginning of every epistle, I have distinguished him from the supreme being, by giving the title of God to the Father, and that of Lord to our Saviour. Which distinction runs through the whole work, except in the epistle to the Hebrews, where I tell them, that “God, who spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets, in these last days has spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath made heir of all things, and by whom he made the worlds* ; who being the splendor of his glory, and the character of his substance, carrying all things by the power of his word, making the purification of our sins by himself, he sat upon the right hand of greatness in the highest; being made so much more excellent than the angels, by as much as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they; for to whom of the angels did he ever say, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I shall be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son! But when he brings his first-born again into the world, he says,

* *By whom he made the worlds.* Concerning this text and others of like nature, see the books recommended in the next page.

and let all the angels of God worship him. And to the angels, he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire : But to the Son, Thy throne, O God, is for ever ; the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom ; thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ; wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Have I not said in other places, " Ye have the same relation to Christ, that Christ has to God ; that Christ is the first-born of every creature * ; that he died, and was raised again from the dead by God ? " Have not I said, as plain as words can express, " that there is no other God but one ; for although there are such beings as are called Gods, whether in heaven, or in earth ; yet, to us christians, there is but one God, viz. the Father, from whom are all things, and we by him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." I will have you know also, that " Christ is the head of every man ; man is the

* This phrase the *first-born* signifies head or chief. The Editor refers his readers to Mr. LOWMAN's TRACTS, and to a small treatise entitled, *A Letter writ 1730*, both of them sold by Noon, and Fenner, and Buckland. In this last treatise, our Lord's humanity is demonstrated, and the notion of his pre-existence is shewn to have no foundation in scripture, to be a thing absolutely incredible, and equally impossible as *Transubstantiation*. The author of this *Letter* is the truly pious and learned Dr Lardner, author of the *Credibility of the Gospel-History* in seventeen volumes ; a work which deserves the thanks of the whole christian world.

head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ: Then shall be the end, when he shall deliver up his kingdom to God the Father; then shall Christ be submitted to him that hath put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath put all things under his feet; and made him the head of all things to the church." From what I have just now said, I shall make it as clear as is possible for words to express, that my doctrine about Christ is diametrically contrary to that which these learned doctors so vehemently contend for. Nor will that trite and pitiful distinction, of the divine and human nature, in the least avail them here; for they will not only be driven from that weak hold, but be cut off even from chicanery itself. As they have hitherto admitted, that Christ existed in his highest capacity before the worlds were made, I shall argue upon that supposition. Is there any thing, then, more clear and apparent, than that the supreme God made that very person heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds? Is it not the same person that sits down at the right hand of greatness, and that is made more excellent than the angels? Is it not still the same person whom he calls by the eminent appellation of God, and whose "God hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows?" When this divine person, therefore, was made heir of all things, did not he receive

ceive dignity, power or some advantage, at least, which he did not possess before? When God made the worlds by this person; did he not use him as an agent or instrument, and consequently employ him as an inferior being? Again, Christ, you say, is the supreme God; but Christ is also the first-born of every creature: Therefore the supreme God, according to you, is the first-born of every creature. Here again, most conscientious and reverend divines, your old trick of playing fast and loose, with the divine and human nature, fails you; for certainly Christ was not the first-born of every human creature; for then he must have been born before his mother. I hope, gentlemen, that you will have the modesty to grant me this. And, in a line or two farther, I have shewed you, that my calling Christ God, is not the least proof in the world, that he must be the supreme God; for this is a common expression in the Old Testament, and is frequently applied to other beings, as well as to the supreme; who, therefore, is distinguished by the title of the God of Gods. For, in the Old Testament, even Moses and the judges were called Gods; and this I have taken care to assert and explain in such a manner, as makes it impossible for the Son to be the supreme God, if the positive assertion of an apostle may be allowed as a proof; for I have solemnly affirmed, that to us Christians, there is but one God, which is God the Father:

Father: Consequently, unless they can prove the Son to be the Father, he cannot possibly be that one God. And I have also told you, that to us Christians, there is one Lord, which is Jesus Christ; therefore, as I have said above, if Jesus Christ is not the Father, he cannot be the supreme God. Now I will submit it to the determination of every honest man, whether the doctrine of the modern apostles is not directly contradictory to mine, and consequently to that of all the sacred writers. But what are not those men capable of, that can tell you, that the eternal God was begotten; and that the first-born of every creature was not created? Or what absurdity can be equal to the following, viz. That God died to make infinite satisfaction to God? Here is the immortal eternal God dies to appease himself. Is it to be imagined, that if I had known Jesus Christ to have been the supreme God, that I should not have worshipped him as devoutly, adored him with as much reverence, and described him with as much majesty, as the modern apostles? Would it not have been my duty, as well as theirs, to have told the people (whom I was to convert and instruct in the christian faith) that the supreme God was come down from heaven to be born of a virgin, and to take humanity upon him; and that Jesus Christ, being God-man, was this supreme Being; and that, while John was baptizing

tizing the supreme God, the Supreme came down from heaven, in the form of a dove, and sanctified the supreme God; and that he cured the lame and the blind, and raised the dead, by his own omnipotent power, and not by that of the Father. But had I said this, I should have spoke most extravagant nonsense, uttered a most audacious falsehood, and have impudently contradicted Christ himself; and for which I should deserve to be treated like an execrable villain.

Mr. Whiston. As your Lordship has heard the opinions of the chief of the apostles, I shall beg leave to call in the evangelists in their order, who must necessarily agree with the apostles, or the christian religion itself must fall to the ground.

Judge. Mr. Matthew, the question is very short: Do you believe Jesus Christ to be the supreme God?

Matthew. My Lord, I shall be as short in my answer. I do affirm it to be impossible for that being to be the supreme God, that ascribes every act to, and derives every power from, the supreme God; and this Jesus Christ frequently acknowledges, in regard to himself, and said in express words, "The Father is greater than me." Oh, but, says the learned gentleman, this was spoken in relation to his human capacity. I wonder he does not tell me, that it was spoken in his childish capacity, and that he meant his father Joseph: Though, to say the truth, this is so silly a speech,
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in the sense the church has taken it, that even a child could not be weak enough to have made it. What a pretty complement then do they make Christ and his followers, by imagining that any of them could have been so profoundly stupid as not to know, that the supreme God was greater than a man?

Dr. Trapp, give me leave to tell you, Sir, that there is a finesse in that passage, which is too delicate for a gentleman of your cast. However, I will do you the honour to explain it to you; and, in order to it, I must acquaint you, that your master had a threefold manner of conveying his instructions; which was many times by parables, sometimes by paradoxes, and upon certain emergencies, by equivocation and double entendre, as in the case before us: For he being composed of two distinct natures, it was entirely at his election to call which of them he pleased [ME]; by virtue of which he might always have two different answers ready upon any extraordinary occasion. For example, suppose now, that such a wicked rogue as Judas had a mind to betray him, and should ask him, Whether he were the supreme God? Why, Sir, he might very safely have taken his oath upon it, that he was not; only by mentally reserving *quatenus* the human nature. On the other hand, if the same question were to be put to a disciple that he could trust, he might just as honestly own himself to be the supreme God;

God; and we are credibly informed, that he never made the least secret of it to his particular friends: for (notwithstanding that the enemies of religion have robbed us of the privilege of pleading tradition) they have not deprived us of the liberty of founding our doctrines upon it, or of making such interpretations of the Scriptures as shall be most beneficial to the church. And as it is highly reasonable, that we should pay a greater regard to her authority, than to a few unguarded expressions of Peter and Paul; so we have unanimously agreed, to maintain her mysteries to the last drop of our blood.

Mr. Whiston. My Lord, Mr. Mark the evangelist being absent, at the beginning of the trial, I desire that he may have Dr. Trapp's trinity read to him.

Judge. Mr. Mark, you are cited here upon a very solemn occasion; and the reason of this creed's being read to you is, to know whether you do in your conscience believe what is in it to be true?

Mark. My Lord, as I am a perfect stranger to this dispute, I should be very glad to be informed of the nature of a creed, to know whence it is taken, by whom it is made, and to what intent and purpose it is published.

Mr. Whiston. If your Lordship will give me leave, I will give him that satisfaction in a very few words. Sir, a creed is a particular system of faith,
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composed of the particular opinions of a club of parsons, and it is pretended to be drawn out of the holy Scriptures. This is what the people are obliged to profess, or submit to lose their employments, and to be put in jail, and be starved. And it is only for want of compliance to this, that you see me here in bonds.

Mark. Can the church be so wicked and barbarous! and does it pretend to have an authority from the Scriptures to persecute? and do the people tamely sit still, and suffer it? But let your tyranny be ever so cruel and extensive, it shall not deter me from speaking truth; and I defy you to shew the least syllable in my writings, that favours your blasphemous nonsense: but, on the contrary, shall bring you such a proof, that Jesus Christ is not the supreme God, that impudence itself would almost blush to oppose it.

Dr. Trapp. You dog! How dare you treat the spouse of Christ thus irreverently! Sirrah, you deserve — &c.

Mark. You mistake, Sir, it is the whore of Babylon that I chastise; whose prostitution, impudence, cruelty, covetousness, corruption, treachery, insolence, and ambition, were never equalled on this side hell. And certainly, if any villains ever deserved eternal tortures, they are those that corrupt and delude the very people they take upon them to instruct and preserve; they are those that rob, tyrannise, and murder, under a pretence of religion,

religion, humility, and charity : In fine, it is those rapacious, hypocritical, letcherous gluttons, that have changed a plain and reasonable institution into mysterious nonsense and juggling absurdities ; placing the essence of religion in quirks and tricks ; cheating the people, oppressing the poor, trampling upon the laws, and treading upon the necks of princes. My Lord, I should beg pardon for this severe reply, if the provocation had not extorted it, and truth had not justified it : However, I shall now go on with my proof. Our Saviour has often declared himself inferior to the Father ; and the instance, by which I am going to prove that he is so, is so very remarkable, that I shall consider it in as distinct and particular a manner as possible. Speaking of the day of judgment, says he, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.* Who can cast his eye upon this assertion of our Saviour, without taking notice of the regular gradation, manifestly formed with an intent to exclude all other beings whatsoever, and to confine the fore-knowledge of the day of judgment to the Father only ? And since the reverends and right reverends have thought fit to say, that Christ is a composition of a divine and human nature, and that this want of knowledge is asserted of his human nature only, I shall prove the contrary of it beyond all exception ; for the very first pro-

proposition excludes Christ as to his human nature, by saying, *that no man knows that day*; and the next proposition excludes the next superior degree of intelligent beings, by adding, in a most emphatical manner, that even *the angels that are in heaven*, did not know it; after which he rises still higher, and declares that even *the Son* (in that capacity which he is in, superior to the angels) did not know it, *but the Father* only: so that nothing in nature can be more evident, than that all other persons, even of the Trinity itself, as well as all other beings, are excluded, and that he has limited that knowledge to the person of the Father only; for whatever was not the Father, he positively affirms, was ignorant of that day. Now it is certain, that the Son was not the Father in any sense; therefore could not know that day: Jesus Christ, therefore, being inferior in knowledge to the supreme God, cannot possibly be the supreme God.

Judge. You are called here, Mr. Luke, upon the occasion of a learned divine's being accused of heresy, in having denied Jesus Christ to be the supreme God; and as you are one of the inspired writers, the court desires your opinion upon that point.

Luke. Your Lordship does me too much honour, in calling me inspired: I pretend to no more than that of being an honest and diligent collector; and claim no other merit, but that
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of having faithfully recorded what appeared most agreeable to reason, or had the best evidence to support it. If it had been the doctrine of the apostles, or the established opinion of the age I wrote in, that Jesus Christ was the supreme God, is it to be imagined, that I should not have declared it clearly and fully to all the world? But I do affirm the fact to be directly contrary; and, if your creed-makers are in the right, I must be in the wrong; for I must acknowledge, that I have distinguished the great God from Jesus Christ, in a great many parts of my history; which I could not have done, unless I had been a fool or a villain, if I had thought that Jesus Christ and the great God of heaven had been the same omnipotent, co-equal, and co-eternal God. My expressions are these; *The Lord God shall give unto Christ the throne of his Father DAVID; the Christ of God; the Chosen of God.* Though this description of Christ is manifestly incompatible with the character of the great God; yet, since it is in the power of prejudice to hinder men from seeing apparent truths, and that whole bodies of men, for their interest, can be hardy enough to deny them, I shall beg the favour of you, to observe how those passages will appear, if we were to suppose Christ to be the omnipotent God, and to be described as such. Those passages, then, must run thus: *The only, eternal, omnipotent God, shall give unto the only, eternal, omnipotent God, the throne*

throne of the only, omnipotent God's father, ABRAHAM: And again, The only omnipotent God, is the Chosen of the only omnipotent God. These absurdities and contradictions are so palpable, that as they, that cannot perceive them, can see nothing; so they that will not acknowledge them, will acknowledge nothing.

Judge. What do you say, John, to Dr. Trapp's Trinity?

John. Verily, I am at a loss what to say to that which I cannot possibly understand; but thus much I may venture to affirm, that the gospel I wrote, and the faith I preached, were to enlighten mankind. But that the inventions of these men have not only put out that light, which the gospel brought into the world, but have extinguished the light of nature itself, and put the world into a much worse condition than it was when it had no other guide but reason to direct it; for reason will not act against itself, advise us to abandon it, or deliver it up to those who make it their study to deceive us. My account of our blessed Saviour is uniform, clear, rational, and plain, as will evidently appear from the following passages. *Oh Father, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. And again, I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and unto my God, and your God. The Son can do nothing of himself; but what*

what he seeth the Father do, that the Son doth also. They accused him of blasphemy; because thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, if he called them Gods, to whom the Word of God came; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? Jesus, a man approved by miracles, which God did by him: God hath made the same Jesus both Lord and Christ. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, he doth the works. The Father is greater than I. The passages are so plain, so full, and so conclusive, that, I protest, the strongest thing I can say, in justification of that which I have already wrote, is, that I cannot possibly express myself clearer, even upon the occasion of the present controversy. But what can words do, if men will be impudent and wicked enough to pervert them? Nay, men that have front enough to deny the common obvious settled sense of words, would even deny that there were any such words at all, if it served for their purpose. There is an end of the use of words, if, in expressing ourselves absolutely of any being whatsoever, you may mean it partially or totally, or take this part or that; for, at this rate, you may say your own creeds backwards, and affirm that Christ (in his divine nature, by tacit reserve) was neither born, suffered, died, nor rose again: and you may be just as orthodox

in

in affirming the contrary, if you are at liberty to mean which nature you please. Such prevarications and quibblings may become priests and Jesuits; but it is monstrous to charge the messenger of God with them. What will destroy the credit and authority of the gospel, if this will not? Or, I should more properly have said, what has brought it to the weak and despicable state it is in at present, but these infamous practices of the clergy? If any man can shew me, that the whole tenor of what I have wrote, is not strictly conformable to those parts which I have just now cited, I will not only confess myself to be unworthy of the name of an evangelist, but submit to be called a traitor to my Master, and a deceiver of mankind: for whoever shall affirm, that I have described Jesus Christ as equal with the Father, does not only endeavour to prove my doctrine to be repugnant to itself, but makes the Scriptures of no authority. Are these the men that contend so vehemently for their being inspired! These, that have the assurance to pervert or contradict the whole tenor of them! If this honest gentleman, Mr. Whiston, were to assert, that the Son is inferior to the Father, could he do it in stronger terms, or in a more plain and positive manner, than I have done? Could he say any thing stronger, than that *the Father is greater than the Son*; that *He sent him, commanded him, and performed every operation in him*; let every

impartial man judge, whether he would look upon such a character as this, to be the character of the great God of heaven, or to be that of an inferior being.

Judge. Mr. James, what do you say to the reverend doctor's Trinity? Do you understand it?

James. The greatest part of what I do understand, is false; and what I do not, I humbly conceive to be nonsense. I am not for three Gods, I assure you; for I have said, *Thou believest that God is one, thou doest well.* I have profest myself a servant of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is distinction enough, to shew that there are two distinct beings. But if the Father be God, and the Son is God, God is not one. I wrote as I thought, and I flatter myself that I have wrote so as to be understood; for, certainly, nothing can be plainer than that I affirm, that the eternal Godhead no more consists of three somethings, than it does of thirty somethings; and consequently, that this new-fangled trinity must be a gross imposition upon mankind.

Judge. What do you think, Mr. *Jude*, of the doctor's trinity?

Jude. It is impossible that my thoughts can differ from my brethren's, and your Lordship shall judge whether my writings do or no; for I have certainly distinguished Jesus Christ from the great God, if language can distinguish things.

I have

I have expressed myself thus: *Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness; denying God, the only supreme Governour; and denying our Lord Jesus Christ.* And again, *To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved by our Lord Jesus Christ.* Is it possible to imagine, that all the divine writers should constantly distinguish Jesus Christ from the supreme God, and yet know him to be the supreme God? What sort of apostles would these gentlemen make of us? Had not we sense enough to declare it, or was it a revelation reserved for later times? We are always ready to give Jesus Christ all the honour that is due to his character: But, *to the only wise God, we say, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power.*

Judge. Gentlemen of the jury, the unanimous concurrence of every writer in the New Testament, against this doctrine of the Trinity, being the strongest proof that can possibly be added to the absurdity of it; common sense, and common honesty, will sufficiently direct you, to bring in such a verdict as may be expected from you.

Jury. We believe the evangelists and apostles to be very honest men, and to have declared the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and that vicious and corrupted priests have invented these absurdities, with a villainous intent to confound

the understandings, and to destroy the liberties of mankind.

Judge. You gentlemen of the clergy, since the jury has acquitted the prisoner, and brought you in guilty, I shall pass that just sentence, which is established by that law, which requires an eye for an eye. May the laity shew you the same mercy they have ever received from you. Amen.

The End of the TRIAL.



POPERY

POPERY a CRAFT,
AND
POPIISH PRIESTS
THE
CHIEF CRAFTSMEN.
A
S E R M O N,

Delivered on
The FIFTH of NOVEMBER.

First printed in the Year 1735.

POPISH PRIESTS

THE

CHIEF CRATSMEN.

A

S E R M O N

Delivered on

The FIFTH of NOVEMBER.

And printed in the Year 1735.

D 3



ACTS xix. 25.

-----*Sirs! ye know that by this
Craft we have our Wealth.*

WE need only transfer the scene of action from Ephesus to Rome, or to any other city or country, where ambitious and worldly priests trample upon all the rights of truth, reason and conscience, in order to prove these *two* points :

I. That *Popery* is a *craft*, a human craft.

II. That it is a craft, a trade invented and managed with a sole view *to get wealth, power, and greatness*; or, to exalt priests into lords over mankind.

And it is the *gainfulness* of this craft, which inspires the popish priests with so furious a zeal to maintain its credit, and support its practice.

It is equally true that all worldly establishments, and antichristian devices brought into religion are *crafts*, political engines, for loading a set of proud, tyrannical, worldly *clergymen*, with the wealth of the *laity*.

Consequently, a *deliverance* from such a set of men, is a very great and merciful deliverance, and ought to be had in everlasting remembrance.

The whole may be reduced to this *one point*, namely,

That *Popery* is a human invention, to befool, enslave, and impoverish the *laity*; and to magnify and enrich the *clergy*.

No wonder then, if the spiritual tradesmen are very loth to give up their gainful craft.

I shall name a few of the *doctrines* and *practices* of the church of Rome; a short view of which will shew the truth of our positions, and justify the application of the text to our present purpose.

For instance,

1. What can be said for the universal headship and infallibility of the *Pope*? Why, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we get our wealth. By virtue of this doctrine we claim a power over kings, a
right

right to dispose of crowns and kingdoms, and to tax all countries, as once we did England, till God opened their eyes, and then our gainful trade was at an end*.

By virtue of this doctrine, we hook in abundance of money for vacancies of archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbacies, and all spiritual places: for retaining of livings without residence; for change of incumbents; for preventions of benefices before they fall; for resignations, commendams, compositions, dispensations, bulls, giving the pall, &c. &c.

By virtue of this doctrine we bring all spiritual causes into our own courts, where they are managed at vast expence to the *laity*, and bring great gain to the *clergy*.

By virtue of this doctrine, we persuade people to believe and obey whatever the *Pope* decreeth; and we are sure that in all his decrees he will take care of the *clergy*. But,

2. How come you, gentlemen priests, to claim freedom from secular jurisdiction, and to pretend that *lay-judges* have no authority over *churchmen*? Why, by this craft we have our wealth: Hereby we *clergymen* are fixed in our dependence on the *Pope*, who connives at all our rogueries. In all

* See in Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, vol. 1. p. 369. a table of the Pope's unreasonable gatherings, exactions and oppressions in the realm of England.

criminal causes, we are to be tried by our spiritual brethren, and courts made up of our own tribe will never hurt us: be we ever such knaves, we hardly ever come to the gallows, while *priests* are our judges.

By this doctrine, we not only save our necks, but we preserve the mastership of our own wealth; and hereby our spiritual powers shine above those of temporal princes.

3. Why do you priests insist upon auricular confession, and oblige all the laity to tell all the secrets of their life in private to you? *Ans.* By this craft we get our wealth.

All our people fear disobliging us, knowing what tales we are able to tell against them.

By this art we fetch out all the secrets of kings and kingdoms, and keep the world in awe.

We get many a bribe for secrecy, and have it any time in our power to revenge our own quarrel.

Besides, the *penances* we enjoin are a very gainful part of our trade, as we are able to sell *commutations* of penance at our own price.

This leads us to enquire,

4. What can be said for dispensations and indulgencies to sin for time to come, and pardons for sins in time past, which the *Pope* and the *priests* pretend to bestow? Why, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. We get a world of money by this article of our trade.

These

These *indulgences* cost us very little, yet the deluded people buy them at great rates. They will give round sums for a liberty to sin, or to quit scores with God and the *priest* after sinning.

We know, indeed, when a man is condemned by God, it will be but a poor comfort to him, that he hath the *Pope's pardon* in his pocket; but the priestly power of absolution is so well established in our church, that we think our trade pretty safe: we have so effectually hood-winked the laity, that we hope they will not easily be undeceived.

But pray, gentlemen, how can you defend,

5. The doctrine of *purgatory*, a place of future torments, out of which souls may be delivered by the masses of *priests*? Why, Sirs, all the world, except our own slaves, know, that by this craft we have our wealth.

Who would not give a good deal of money, rather than lie many years in torment; especially at a time when he can keep his money no longer, and giveth what is scarcely his own?

Can a sinner make a *better hand* of his wealth, than by giving it the priests to be soon prayed into heaven?

This is the most wonderful trick in all our craft, for purging the pockets of the laity.

Besides, it procureth to us a *vast reverence*, when people believe our powers reach into the other world, and can affect them after death. What will

not people do to please men, who have the keys of heaven and hell !

Moreover, this art we are able to manage in the greatest perfection: As we are bred up in all the methods of craft and subtlety, we know how to treat every constitution, to humour every inclination, to apply to every passion, and to suit ourselves to every season. It is our constant maxim to attend the beds of dying sinners; and the more flaming their vices have been, the better hope we have of success: we take advantage from their distempers, and their natural fears, to overwhelm the poor wretches with terrible ideas of *purgatory*, of which we believe not a word ourselves: we confound their imaginations by awful descriptions, and cherish every superstitious fear we have raised. At length our patients lose all liberty, strength, and capacity of reasoning; they take any impression we desire: then, with wonderful address and cunning, and with all the airs of gravity and concern, we sell our ghostly advice and consolation to the dying at what price we please; and if we give them any hope, and pronounce absolution, they are sure to pay dear for it. Thus, by this craft, we get our wealth.

But can any thing be offered to defend

6. Creature-worship, reverence to the virgin, devotion to dead saints and dead sinners, a veneration for images and relics?

Yea,

Yes, by this craft we get our wealth. Such offerings are brought to our churches, and the shrines of our canonized saints, that they exceed the palaces of princes in costly ornaments: the officers of our churches are maintained like noblemen; and, in many countries, we have engrossed almost a third part of the lands and riches of the kingdom.—Our *wooden gods* have procured us a deal of good money.

Our churches and abbies are a resource of boundless wealth, on any extraordinary occasion. We are able to maintain spies in all courts, and to send emissaries into all countries, and pay armies to support the hierarchy.

Old girdles, bits of rotten wood, the legs of an ass, and other such precious ware, we can sell at vast rates: our market for these holy trifles runs indeed higher or lower, as the number of fools is, who come to buy; but they generally go off for ready money. But,

7. Can the monstrous doctrine of *transubstantiation* be defended? Yes, by this craft we also get wealth.

This wonderful trick we have got, of turning bread into a real human body, creates in people a prodigious reverence for a man, who, by pro-

Note. From the *Hoc est Corpus* of the popish church-jugglers, is derived the *Hocus Pocus* of our market-jugglers, who impose upon the vulgar with more art, but with less impudence than the Romish priests.

nouncing

nouncing a few words, can produce so extraordinary an effect.

When once we have brought people to believe this, they will then swallow every other doctrine the priests shall teach.

This exceedingly *magnifies* the clergy, who, having got dominion over the *understandings* and *consciences* of the laity, easily assume an empire over their *purses*.

We own it requires an uncommon stock of *impudence*, thus to out-face people's reason and senses, their eye-sight, feeling, taste, smell, hearing; but we have carried our point for some ages, and are resolved to stand by it as long as we can.

8. And why are the laity deprived of their *Bibles*, unless a special licence be obtained? and have you priests the sole authority to interpret Scripture? and why must men, in worshipping God, do and say they know not what, by saying their prayers in Latin? Why, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

This is our *fundamental art*: We are undone, and our trade at an end, if the laity read and understand the Bible, and begin to open their eyes.

The *Bible* is the most dangerous book that ever was printed: if it go abroad, all our craft is in danger; and we are in terrible fear, that the *art of printing* will one day be our ruin.

As

As to our claim to *interpret* the Scriptures for our people, this keeps us masters of the faith and understandings of the laity. And *unintelligible prayers* help to keep men blind; and support an opinion, "That it is enough if their priests pray and understand for them."

If it be asked,

9. Why is *celibacy* and a monastic life so strictly required, and so much exalted? The answer is still the same: This keeps all our wealth among the *clergy*; whereas, by the priests marriage, it would be scattered amongst the unhallowed *laity*.

To make us amends, we are indulged all liberties with the fair sex; and yet freed from the expence of mistresses and off-spring. Again,

10. Why are the laity denied *one half* of the sacrament?

Ans. To keep all such rich wines for the priests, and to make a sufficient distinction between the order of *holy men* and the *common herd*.

Yet we have a trick in protestant countries, to cheat people by a *cup of absolution*, instead of the *cup of consecration*.

11. Why are works of *Supererogation* defended?

Ans. To fill the *Pope's* coffers by the sale of them.

12. Why are so many *holy-days* instituted and imposed by your church?

To

To keep the laity poor, and to indulge them in sensual pleasures, that they may not feel the yoke of the priests, nor trouble their heads with reading and religious disputes, which always turn to our disadvantage.

13. Why are such a croud of ceremonies introduced into your worship?

Ans. When we have robbed and cheated our people of their understandings, consciences, religion, liberties, wealth, we must *substitute something* in their room; and we endeavour to amuse and divert them by a train of fopperies, and christen them by the name of *devotion*.

We paint and adorn our churches, erect and enrich altars, and make all our worship magnificent and gaudy, on purpose to be a bait to catch the eyes. and dazzle the imaginations of the deluded people, who are pleased with this pomp; and diverted from any enquiries about the truth of our worship, or the foundation of our claims.

We dress up our clergy in a very solemn manner, and in peculiar habits, on purpose to cover their ignorance or want of virtue, by an exterior garb; that our persons may be revered, where no deference is due to our parts, learning, or integrity. Lastly,

14. What can be said to justify all the hellish plots, treacheries, treasons, and cruelties of the church of Rome?

Ans.

Ans. All this is for the good of the church. We only practise these where our arts fail, and men begin to despise us and our trade.

If *heaven* do not favour us, we press *hell* into our service, and are able to consecrate the greatest villainies and the most barbarous cruelties *. Then the estates and riches of murdered heretics, fall to the share of the priests; and by this craft we have our wealth.

From the whole, doth it not appear, "That *Popery* is merely a *human invention*, a worldly engine to greaten and enrich an army of tyrannical, haughty, luxurious, idle, knavish, ill-mannered *clergymen*?"

That it is a *craft*, to get the wealth of the world into the hands of the priests.

That it is a kingdom *wholly of this world*, supported by worldly laws, worldly maxims and policies, worldly rewards and terrors.

That all the strength of *Popery* lies in these two points:

The *blindness of the laity*.

The *gains of the clergy*.

By all their peculiar doctrines are the priests gainers: They gain dominion over *conscience*, reverence to their *persons*, or wealth into their *purses*; by making the laity fools, slaves, and beggars.

* *Fleclare si nequeo superos. Acheronta movebo.* Virg. *Æn.* 7.

From the whole account, it appears farther,
 " That *Popery* is a *religion* worse than *Deism*, as
 " it is contradictory to all the principles of reason,
 " and utterly inconsistent with our ideas of the per-
 " fections of God. Yea,
 " That it is worse than *Atheism* itself, which can
 " only deprive us of all *religious motives* to be vir-
 " tuous; whereas *Popery* inspires us with the *strong-*
 " *est motives* to be *vitious*: it fills us with *hatred*
 " to all mankind, but those of our own persuasion:
 " It tears up every *moral principle*, and, under a
 " solemn pretence of *supernatural charity*, destroys
 " all *humanity*."

But, as surely as there is a God and a provi-
 dence, as surely as the gospel is true, so surely
 these *craftsmen* will not be always gainers by their
 craft: their trade will fail them.

It is a dark providence, that the *priests* reign
 hath endured so long: It is a scene which shews
 the need, and proveth the certainty of a *future*
judgment.

From the whole it appears, how great is our *de-*
liverance from these spiritual tyrants. What a
 blessing was the discovery of the *powder-plot*! what
 a blessing king William was! what a blessing king
 George, and the present *royal family*!

See a farther description of popish craftsmen in the *Ploughman's*
Prayer: And in a letter from the *devil* to the *popish priests*, to
 thank them for the eminent services they had done him. In *Fox*,
vol. i. p. 521, 655.

But

But I expect you are ready to ask the reason. I so soon quit the scene at Ephesus, and the story of the *pagan* high church mob there, which is so much to my purpose?

Ans. This story is so well represented, embellished, and applied in print, that there is scarce room for improvement: However, as few of you have perhaps seen that discourse, I shall, in the lively turns of that author, and in an easy and natural method, give you such a view of this curious piece of history, as will convince you, that all high-church priests, whether at Rome, or elsewhere, are spiritual crafts-men, traders for the wealth and honours of this world.

To enter, then, upon our curious subject: At *ver.* 21. you see what vast and noble designs possessed the generous breast of St. Paul; he aims at spreading light over all Europe, and delivering souls from captivity to the devil, and cheating priests in all countries.

From Ephesus he is hastened away by a *great stir*, raised against the new gospel-way of worshipping God, *ver.* 23.

If God enjoin and direct men to ever so clear and good a way to heaven, yet many will reject it, only because it is a *new way*. But surely, it is better to go in a new way to heaven, than to keep in the way to hell. Antiquity, customs of forefathers, and universality have been antient pleas to keep people in darkness and error.

Let

Let us further open the contents of this story in *some Enquiries*. As,

First, Who raised this commotion?

Ans. It was the *crafts-men*, with one *Deme-trius* at the head of them. Men who manufactured and traded in religious fopperies; sacred *toy-men*, who dealt in images, beads, wafers, *Agnus Dei's*, holy water, and holy garments, &c.

These, in Romish churches answer the *shrines* for *Diana* in the Pagan church at Ephesus, *ver.* 24.

Diana was a she-deity, originally the moon, called by the Pagan priests, the *queen of heaven*. These *shrines* were little capsula's, or cases, in the form of a temple, with the image of this goddess in them.

Whenever God raiseth up a number of excellent preachers and holy livers, superstitious and sensual priests will raise up a great *sir* against them.

Crafts-men, who get money by the folly and ignorance of the people, will oppose *God* and *Christ*, and raise war against heaven rather than part with their gain.

The godly trade of image-making must be supported whatever become of religion and the souls of men.

Let us enquire,

Secondly, What method doth this crafts-man, this high-church zealot, take to oppose the *new way* which *Christ* and St. Paul were setting up?

He

He assembles all the master-workmen and tribe of journeymen, *ver.* 24, 25. He gathers a mob, suppose of hireling priests, curates, friars, monks, and makes to them an *elegant barrangue*.

Thus he begins his Sermon.

Sirs! Ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Very true: Were it not for the craft of cheating the people, and fobbing of poor souls with shows and gestures, bowings, crossings, and holy sprinklings—The trade of worldly and knavish priests would be at an end. Religion and real holiness are matters they deal very little in.

If people once throw away relics, images, pardons, holy water, masses and crosses, the pope's priests are ruined.

Touch but the wealth of these holy men, reform their spiritual courts, and suffer them to get no more money by the sins of the people, and they will raise terrible out-cries, as if all religion was at stake.

Nothing so gauls worldly churchmen, or so kindles their zeal as fears of losing their wealth. They will storm like thunder, ride and write like furies, to prevent reformation.

Luther and Calvin threw them into such a fright, they have scarce recovered themselves to this day.

This leads us to enquire,

Thirdly, Who was the man that durst touch this craft of theirs, and endeavour to bring the people to their senses?

Ans. It was one Paul a *protestant minister*, who protested against all church corruptions : A *dissenting minister*, who dissented from the religion established at Ephesus ; and who had disturbed almost one half of the world by his preaching, *ver. 26.*

One man, with truth and Christ on his side, is able to defeat a whole army, a whole hierarchy of crafts-men, if he be allowed a fair hearing.

One Paul, one Luther, one Calvin, is an overmatch for all the hireling-priests in the world.

One *poor monk*, in whom the light of gospel-truth began to shine, shakes the whole papal kingdom, and confounds *pope, cardinals, bishops* and *priests*, without any other aid, but the truth and goodness of his cause.

But let us enquire,

Fourthly, What was the *great Heresy* this Paul preached ?

Why, *that they be no gods which are made with hands*, *ver. 26.*

Wicked doctrine, indeed ! the very heresy of the protestants ; that *popish idols* are no gods ; that *crossings*, bowing to the altar and to the East, holy garments and holy days, are a parcel of human inventions.

What barbarous murders did the *Papists* commit a few years ago at *Thorn in Poland*, because the Protestants

Protestants burnt two or three of their *wooden gods*?

Was St. Paul to rise from the dead, and preach and live as he did, the *Papists* would burn him alive as a heretic, a man not fit to live. Now,

Fifthly, What is like to be the *consequence* of such heretical preaching as Paul's was?

Why *this our craft is in danger to be set at nought*, ver. 27. Very true; when people's eyes are opened, they will give no more money for pardons, masses, commutations of penance, priestly absolutions, &c. and then priest-craft signifies nothing.

There are a set of men, who turn their churches into *toy-shops*, *show-rooms*, and *music-meetings*; and when they are laughed at, cry, "They are in danger.

It is no wonder, indeed, that churches made up of human inventions, governed by secular canons, supported by worldly interest and temporal power, should be *in danger*; but the true church of Christ being founded on the rock of eternal truth, can never be in danger. All the powers of Rome and *hell* cannot prevail against her.

Whenever God's truth breaks forth, and honest men have liberty to preach it, the *Devil's* and the *Pope's* kingdom will be in terrible danger; then every thing else in divine worship will
be

be set at nought, which hath *no support in God's word.*

God sent the gospel of his Son into the world, not to enrich the clergy, but to convert souls, and to reform the world; which is the visible design of that *godlike institution.* But,

Sixthly, What was likely to be the *farther consequence* of Paul's preaching the sincere and uncorrupted gospel?

Ans. *The temple of the great goddess Diana would be despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom all the world worshipped, ver. 27.*

When churchmen's sinful gains are in danger, they cry, *The church is in danger!* And gain being their only godliness, the chief idol they worship, it is very true, that *their* church and religion are in danger enough, if the gospel be but honestly preached.

But is it not a wicked craft, to bring down God and heaven to espouse the cause of unrighteousness and deceit? yet furious priests will press heaven and earth in defence of their forgeries, and superstitions; nor part with a tittle, a shrine, or a ceremony, to save a soul.

There was certainly something divine in Paul and his doctrine, which put the whole tribe of Pagan priests into such a fright.

The temple of the lady at Loretto, and all other popish *toy-shops*, would soon be despised, and the

the magnificence of the prelates humbled, if the gospel and truth had but *fair play*.

Let us now enquire,

Seventhly, What effect this crafts-man's sermon had upon the *auditory*?

They were full of wrath, ver. 28.

The holy tribe were stark mad, to hear that their trade and their idol were both in danger.

Hot sermons have usually violent effects upon a blind and bigoted assembly; while wise and calm hearers see the absurdities and weakness of the discourse; and despise the *passion*, and perhaps the *villainy* of the preacher.

But when the blind lead the blind, the wilfully blind lead the *unfortunately* blind; the issue will be endless blindness.

What is the Cry?

Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

In Jewish language, *the temple, the temple, the temple!*

In Popish language, *the virgin, the virgin, the virgin!*

In high-church language, *the kirk, the kirk, the kirk;—the church, the church, the church!*

As the author referred to observes, Such is the power of delusion and false zeal, that let but a priest point at a wind-mill, and cry, *The church is falling*, and his congregation will venture their brains to stop the sails.

What a pity souls should be thus cheated!

The whole city was in an uproar, ver. 29.

What mischief is one fiery *priest*, one passionate *sermon* able to do!

This is not the way of Christ and Christian preachers: When men contend for *God* and *truth*, they do it *calmly*, as knowing a good cause will support itself: But error, conscious of its own weakness, flies for support to rage, violence and confusion.

They rush into the theatre.

How oft do noise and clamour run down sacred truth, which loves calmness and order. For two hours nothing is heard, but *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, ver. 34. Paul, and his Protestant dissenting brethren, could not get in a word amongst them.

Be a cause ever so good, *rage* and *fury* are ill methods to support it: The wrath of man never promoteth the righteousness of God.

Wrath, clamour, bitterness, are of a quite different nature from reasoning and gospel-persuasion. These passions only serve the cause of the enemy who raiseth them.

Eighthly and Lastly, How is this ecclesiastical mob *dispersed*, and this tumult *appeased*, which these church-toymakers had raised?

Ans. It is done by the prudence and moderation of a sensible *Layman*, the town-clerk, or register of the games, who talks to better purpose

pose than the whole convocation of priests,
ver. 35.

He telleth them this worship was *established by law*, and had a *majority* on its side, ver. 35. 36. And then, had it been a *moloch* or a *may-pole*, it would have had the knavish priests on its side, and must have been worshipped. And if the priests *say* it, the blind people will fall down, tho' it be to a wooden-cross, or a decayed stone, on the high-way; a worm-eaten image, or a mouldy wafer.

To humour the people he owns it to be *the image that fell down from Jupiter*. So the Romish priests say, the chapel of the virgin at Loretto, was carried by angels from the holy land into Italy.

All the lumber of the popish priests came from God; yet they are scared out of their wits, if *men* offer to take it from them; as if God could not defend his own gifts.

He tells them Paul had not *robbed* their temples, or *blasphemed* their goddesses, ver. 37. For knavish tricks, and foul language, only hurt the cause of God and truth.

Urging the conscience with argument, and moving the heart by persuasion, are the weapons of Christ's workmen.

He tells Demetrius and the priests, "That the court of common-pleas was open, if they had any charge against Paul." ver. 38. But the mis-

fortune is, the cause of image-worship and church-fopperies will not bear a fair trial.

To conclude,

When men, in any cause, avoid calm and fair reasoning, when they grow angry in defence of their opinions, and treat with ill words and ill manners those who oppose them; let them not lie for *God*, *Christ* and religion, and say, *It was for him*: But let the zealots answer for that pride, revenge, railing, cruelty, which their own passion has produced.

And let us all join in *admiring praise* to that *God*, who hath so oft delivered us from the hellish fury of the Romish priests; men as void of truth, as they are of charity: Let us acknowledge his goodness, who yet delivereth, and live in hope that he will still deliver us.

The End of the SERMON.

T H E

THE
Extraordinary CLAIMS
OF THE
CLERGY

Repugnant to
Reason and Christianity;

AND THE
ARGUMENTS advanced in their
Defence, in a late APOLOGY
for the Clergy of the Church of
England, Examined.

In a LETTER from a LAYMAN
to the Rev^d. Dr. STEBBING.

First printed in the Year 1735.

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IN A LETTER from a LAYMAN

to the Rev^d. Dr. STEPHENS.

First printed in the Year 1735.



Reverend Sir,

I Some time ago read a small tract, intitl'd,
*An Apology for the Clergy of the church of
 England, touching their claims of spiritual
 powers, as derived from Christ, addressed to the
 Laity of Great Britain*; without thinking it worth
 any farther notice: Supposing it the production
 of some dissatisfied curate, wrote either to please
 his patron, or to revenge some trifling affront sup-
 posed to be given his gown. But, on my being
 lately assured it came from a no less masterly hand
 than your own, I prevailed with myself to make
 a few cursory remarks on it; in order to con-
 vince you how far beneath yourself the near re-
 lation of the subject has unwarily carried you;
 and, to prevent your thinking it beyond answer,
 because no better pen has thought it deserved one.
 And I judge it proper here to declare that no
 base or personal view whatever was the occasion
 of this address; but a disinterested zeal for

truth; to which, you will certainly agree with me, all considerations ought to give place.

The title you have chose is grand and pompous, *An Apology for the Clergy, addressed to the Laity*. On reading this, one would imagine the clergy, at least in your opinion, willing to submit *their claims to our decision*: But, at your beginning, you tell us the causes of your writing:

(P. 3.) “ The English clergy have of late
“ been treated in so extraordinary a manner,
“ that it is high time the public should be made
“ sensible, what *rights* they have to the many ci-
“ vilities that are daily bestowed upon them.”

If, Sir, the *public* are, till this time o’day, ignorant of the rights of the clergy, they have hitherto paid them extraordinary reverence and money to a fine purpose: For the *public* here, I apprehend, means the whole nation, except the clergy; and whence we poor laymen of *all* conditions may judge your opinion of our favours.— However, our knowing so little before, will render us the more obliged for your useful discoveries.

(P. 4.) “ As the title of my book speaks good-
“ will to that order of men (*priests*), I foresee
“ that many prejudices will lie against it; yet I
“ will not so far despair of the justice of man-
“ kind, as not to believe, that truth (by whom-
“ soever offered) will *somewhere* meet with
“ friends; especially when it shall appear, that the
“ dispute

“ dispute is not about the temporal rights of clergy-
 “ men, but about rights of another kind, in which
 “ the interest of our common christianity is more di-
 “ rectly and immediately concerned.”

Now, doctor, we shall understand one another presently: You have here unluckily fallen into the so often exploded rant of the gown.—If we offer to diminish the *power*, or even tear off the hem of a *clergyman's* garment, it is roundly asserted, that the *church* has received a grievous rent; and, perhaps, the secular arm shall be applied to, for redress of the grievance.—This artifice has been already so frequently decry'd, that I wonder to find it distill'd out again, even without the least garnish to whet our appetites: Could the clergy once bring us seriously to believe, that, by opposing *them*, we oppose *Christ*, their work were done; and they then may lead or drive us at their pleasure, according to the pious endeavours of good parson *Betty*, and many other temporally zealous brethren, who labour for the glory of God, that themselves may be exalted to a glorious benefice. The matter in dispute surely is no other, than the *temporal rights of clergymen*; since not one assertion you undertake to confute, respects the *cause of christianity* any farther than the *claims of the clergy* are concerned.

(P. 4.) You seem, doctor, to resent the assertion, That the clergy are *mere creatures* of the *state*: How far it is true, in all such of them as

have opportunity to verify it, is too evident at present to require instances.—But not a little humorous is your telling us, (*ibid.*) that we might *as well* say, the *Bible* wants the authority of the broad seal to constitute it such; as, that a bishop stands in need of it to make him one!!! You may well say, *you venture to say it*; for I really think it, a *brave* assertion, and what requires much more *front* than *learning* to defend it!—I dare say, most of the laity, to whom you address yourself, will own the *sacred authority* of the *Bible* without the *broad seal*: But, if you will force them by this parallel to think a man as fully a bishop without it, I would be glad to know whence he derives *his* authority; or how I shall know a bishop from another priest? since I take it to be the act (in the present constitution of our church) necessarily previous to any other election, ordination, confirmation, &c. and the fountain whence *all* his *ecclesiastical* power springs: For what avails the mean evasion of saying, (*P. 13.*) that *christian princes never considered themselves as the source of spiritual power*; when the prince and his subjects acknowledge no such power in any without his appointment?

(*P. 5.*) You tell us, that the design of your writing was “to lay together a few easy observations, which may serve to direct plain and honest minds, who are not versed in controversies of this kind.”

This

This I think well premised: For the less your reader knows, (not only of this controversy, but of every thing else) the better chance you have to direct him, since the less a man is acquainted with the road, the gladder he is of a seeming guide, a *will o'th' wisp*, who therefore can more easily mislead or trapan him.

I believe the gospel; and therefore, as your own, have a right to speak of it: but one would wonder what some gentlemen had done to merit the insinuation of being *indecent*, the epithets of *presumptuous* and *ignorant*, (P. 6.) till we come to the bottom of the page, where we find their crime is, *pretending to understand the laws of Christ*; and, which is worse yet, to *write down the powers of the Christian clergy*: “Of all persons living, say you, *these have the least reason to expect to be heard or answered.*”—

Here, doctor, is the true spirit of a priest:—Whoever writes against them, their power or their money, must not be *heard*; no, let him speak ever such evident truths, *he must not be heard*:——This, reverend doctor, unhappily for your cause, happens to be out of your power to prevent; as the answering them is beyond the capacities of any of your brethren, who have yet entered the lists against them.——But a little more (were it but seeming) moderation, would well enough become a christian priest, who

is commanded to *convince gainsayers*, which cannot well be done without *bearing* them.

(P. 7.) The gospel being considered as the religion of the ages after its commencement, and the gifts of inspiration to be ceased, you make the faithful at a loss how to preserve and transmit the doctrines of the apostles, for the standard of faith: And, with an air of triumph, (P. 8.) after an emphatic pause, you break forth: “The
“ scripture shews you in what manner the apostles
“ themselves set out. *The things that thou hast*
“ *heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful*
“ *men, who shall be able to teach others also.* 2 Tim.
“ ii. 2.” And then you cite another text (which I repeat presently) in which St. Paul bids Titus ordain elders, or bishops, or both, out of such as were of *holy lives*.

Well, doctor, what of this? Why this, you say, teaches us two things, viz. (P. 9.) That the apostles thought the gospel a trust they were to hand down to future generations; and that they chose the most *blameless persons* they could meet with, for this weighty charge.—This is still nothing to the purpose: For, were they all made bishops, as you would have it, you know we can draw no comparison between either their character or office, with those of our time. What were the elders chose for? To execute that part of the office, which, of all, makes the greatest figure in a bishop's hands now-a-days, viz. to
take

take care of the *temporal affairs of the church*, that the bishop might have no incumbrance in this life, to call his attention from pressing his flock to a steady regard to those of the next.

(P. 10.) “ —From this act of the apostles, “ appointing a *succession* of persons with whom “ the faith of the gospel was *specially* to be intrusted, the *ordinary* ministerial function, and “ the distinction between clergy and laity takes “ its rise.” —

Where you find these words, on which you lay the stress, viz. SUCCESSION, SPECIALLY, I cannot pretend to say ; but am certain, neither they, nor any of equal import, are to be found in scripture. The persons then chose were only selected for their sober lives, and seemed *special* on no other account : As for a *succession* of them, it seems wholly out of the apostle’s view at that time.

(P. 10.) — “ Ask many who *call* themselves “ christians,” [*for none can be such who revere not all priests.*] “ and they will tell you, that (for “ any distinction made by Christ or his apostles) “ all christians are priests ; all alike intrusted with “ the ministration of the word.” —

This, doctor, is certainly true ; and I here defy you, or the most dignified gown-man among you, to *prove* the contrary, notwithstanding all your unmeaning rhetoric which follows, viz. “ But from the beginning it was not so ; nor is “ it

“ it now so : [*This, doctor, you know to your no-
 “ small advantage.*] “ Nor has it ever been
 “ so.”——Nobly asserted, indeed : But it hap-
 pens, that you have either lost or forgot your
 proofs of this fact, or never had any ; what fol-
 lows being no more than a few flat *assertions*, to
 prove an *assertion* you produce no ground for.——
 (P. 10.) “ The method begun by the apostles,
 “ in the very nature of it, is such as supposes a
 “ continuance : The reasons upon which it was
 “ founded, will perpetually hold, &c.”——Ve-
 ry true : But that *this method*, and *these reasons*,
 will make quite against your purpose, is easy to
 see ; as we shall presently observe more fully.

Telling us, that we must suppose from the
 days of the apostles to the time of *Constantine*,
 the church was just in the situation you would
 have us believe, (or, as it now is) you sharply
 “ say (P. 11.) “ *Power* the church then had
 “ none, but what rested entirely within herself ; and
 “ therefore *this method* must have been followed,
 “ unless you will suppose, that, after the first or
 “ second generation of men were gone off, all
 “ things were left to *chance* or *private discretion*,
 “ and every man allowed to take upon himself
 “ the office of a minister in the church, who
 “ had a mind to it ; a notion both absurd in it-
 “ self, and a flat contradiction to every record of
 “ those times, that is now left us.”——

Pray,

Pray, doctor, what absurdity in supposing the church supplied with ministers by *chance*, and *private discretion*? Nay, is it not so now? Perhaps, you'll say, no; because before a man should be admitted into orders, he must necessarily be so qualified, as to be a proper person to be intrusted with the ministration of the christian church.

This is far from answering to the *method* the apostles took in selecting ministers: It is obvious, from scripture, that *none* were chose ministers in the time of *Christ* and the apostles, but such as were men either of exemplary lives, or great and remarkable repentance; or who, some way or other, testified to the world the purity of their faith by the tendency of their works. The *method* begun by Christ, and his *real* and immediate followers, was indisputably *this*: And *this method* was certainly designed for a continuance.

But, surely you will not *venture to say*, this is the method now used in our church. — Holiness of life, a subjection of the passions, &c. were *then* necessary qualifications: Are they so now, by the boasted *successors* to the holy function? Are not a little theological learning, and a professed belief of what one half of the community disallow, sufficient qualifications for a priest at this time? And is it not in the *private discretion* of one bishop to ordain him whom another rejected?

You

You ask us, (P. 12.) “ When the empire
 “ became christian, what followed ? A church
 “ there was already subsisting under the *powers*
 “ delegated from Christ. And did the Roman
 “ emperors, because they were christians, un-
 “ derstand those *powers* as devolved to them-
 “ selves ? — Did they *make* bishops, or priests ;
 “ as they did proconsuls and other civil officers,
 “ by *their own* authority ? No such matter.” —
 “ Though in some cases they restrained church-
 “ men in the exercise of their authority, —
 “ (P. 13.) never did they consider themselves as
 “ the source and fountain of spiritual power,
 “ or churchmen as mere creatures of state.
 “ for the succession was still *every where* car-
 “ ried on, and bishops and priests were made
 “ by bishops.”

When the empire became christian, the al-
 most first thing that followed was its misery and
 destruction, not from the gospel-doctrines, but
 from (what you seem so fond of) the *powers*
 assumed by those who called themselves gospel-
 ministers. When Constantine, charmed with the
 seeming humility and sobriety of the priests,
 turned christian, he soon felt an alteration in
 the clergy ; who, ever ready to grasp at *power*,
 immediately began to meditate a supreme autho-
 rity over their devotees ; and curbed, and, in a
 little time, subverted, that government which
 first gave them public protection. Did not
 Gregory

Gregory II. by an unprecedented assurance, excommunicate and kill the vicar of the empire (Anno 728.) for publishing the imperial decree against images, and thereby move most of Italy, and the emperor's own troops to revolt, and chuse themselves another master? Was not even the whole christian world in a continual ferment, by the disputes between the *patriarchs* of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome; till by the ruin of the two former, the latter became possessed of that power which cost the christians rivers of blood to procure him? Nor was this sole supreme *spiritual* power sufficient: For, after perpetual strugglings for the *temporal* authority also, we find at last even the emperor himself deposed (Anno 1073.) by the craft and villainy of a Roman bishop, and forced to pass the Alps in winter, divest himself of the imperial robes, and glad to walk barefoot, in a woollen frock, to beg pardon of, and be reinvested with his crown from, a bishop of Rome; and all this, for no other reason, than his exercising a power derived to him from his predecessors, of constituting bishops, and governing his own dominions. *Power the church then had, with a witness; nay,* and when the restored emperor Henry happened to offend this powerful bishop afterwards, we find his reverence modest enough to send the imperial crown to another (Rodolph), and undertake to absolve the emperor's subjects of all duty and allegiance

legiance to their natural and lawful sovereign.——
 If, Doctor, *the succession was still continued every where*, Gregory was surely a regular *successor to the apostles*; but how a christian can believe him such, is perhaps easier for you to explain, than me to conceive.——But this you must say to his honour, that he was the first that ever, in a public manner, got a bishop of Rome chose without the emperor's order; and laid the foundation for that *power in the clergy*, which afterwards reduced all christians either to a state of beggary or vassalage, from the throne to the cottage.——And it is to this same power and authority of the church, that we owe the diversion of seeing, in most of our historians, Lewis VI. of France, and Henry II. of England, (A. D. 1161.) jointly leading the horse on which the Twin-Pope, Alexander III, entered Tourcy upon Loire! Whilst the other infallible successor of St. Peter was, at the same time, as much revered by Spain and the empire!

You seem to glory in insinuating, that the emperors did not make bishops; since, as you explain yourself, (P. 13.) “*Nomination or Election was never understood to create the episcopal authority; but ordination, an act purely spiritual, derived from Christ as head of the church, and exercised under him; — without which no person can act as a minister in the church.*”——

Purely

Purely metaphysical this distinction, indeed ! But, however it may sound, is it any more than mere jargon ? — *The bishop is not a bishop by appointment from the head of our church ; but is a bishop independent of such election or appointment ; because, his real power comes from those, who, in obedience to that appointment, ORDAIN him such !* Merry enough ! An officer, in any kind, has not his power from the king who appointed him to the post ; but from those, who, under his majesty, confirm him in it : Without ordination the bishop cannot act as such, though the king has named him ; no more can the other, without being invested by inferior hands to him who nominates him to the post. Besides, why must the whole power of a bishop proceed from his ordination, when it is no more than the last act of form to confirm his election ? Is not his *nomination* the *means* or *occasion* of all that follows ? Does not that *cause* the others ? Why then must the latter be independent, and of a different sanction from the former, when it is a mere consequence of it ? The head of the church I used to esteem the head of bishops ; and cannot help still thinking, that where the real power lies of *making* bishops (however you seem to dislike the term) at pleasure, *there* is the *source* of all their authority *as such* : — And, I am persuaded, that few stanch churchmen would dispute this assertion, in case of the Pope's appointment ; they
being

being generally (as indeed their arguments oblige them) well affected to his spiritual as well as temporal authority and succession, and fond of his independency on temporal princes, the tempting and beloved aim of all our wrangling leaders. For what can be more plain than this, even in your own words, Doctor? You tell us, that *kings* and *emperors* did not make *bishops*, and that their *ordination* only is understood to constitute them such.——Whether this is agreeable to the constitution of the church, of which you are so zealous a member, I leave the world to judge!

You tell us, (P. 14.) that our laws know of no such thing as a bishop without ordination: —True; nor of an exciseman without taking the oaths. Do the oaths then *make* a man an exciseman, and give him his authority? Surely, no: since those, who appoint him, can dispense with his neglect, and yet his power is the same: A bishop possibly may act without *ordination*, but not without *appointment*. In a word, you know, that the *king* is head of our national church; and that all the power a *bishop* has, more than a priest, flows from him, as *fountain* of our *episcopal* authority, and, under God, head of our church; there being no ecclesiastics in *England* endowed with such episcopal authority, any otherwise than is *received from him*, who is either their

their *spiritual head*, or they are all heads themselves.

You triumph mightily in the style of the ordinance for ordination of priests, and tell us, it is there expressly said, (P. 14, 15.) "They are called to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord."—"And are exhorted to shew themselves dutiful and thankful to *that Lord who hath placed them* in so high a dignity."—Whatever divine sense you would, by your great emphasis, have us put on the words, *that Lord who hath placed them*, I believe many would be apt, on such an occasion, to extend their eyes no farther than the *lord bishop*.

In the same exalted voice you immediately add, (P. 15.) that in every office, "whether for bishops, priests, or deacons, the ordination is *suggested* to be performed in pursuance of the directions of Christ, who hath appointed divers orders of ministers in his church."—"And the very words of ordination run, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And then you very judiciously ask, if, after this, (*ibid.*) "any man in his senses can doubt, whether a bishop, in conferring orders, is not considered by the law, as executing a commission *under Christ?*"

The answer to this is so very obvious, that it is almost trifling to add any other words than
your

your own to confute them. What has any man to do with what is *suggested* in the office of ordination, that considers who suggests it? Have not all men an equal right to *suggest*, that, when they appoint a minister of Christ's church, they do it in pursuance of his directions; and, in the name of amazement, what is proved by tacking to the end of all you do, *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?* Was ever such an argument used by any man but yourself! How can this possibly, as you most surprisingly insinuate, prove what the law thinks of your ordination? Pray, Doctor, in your next performance, think of the *sense* of what you write, before you publish it: And, as you labour for the information of the weak and unlearned, let us be able at least to draw *some meaning* or other from what you say, or our edification will be but very little.

In the next place, to prove every thing you have asserted, you cite the following words from the 37th article, viz. (P. 15.) "*We give not to our*
 " *princes the administering either of God's word or*
 " *of the sacraments; the which thing the injunc-*
 " *tions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our queen,*
 " *do most plainly testify.*" The use you make of this is most notoriously strained and unnatural; when you assert that it is plain from hence, that, as princes are not entrusted with the administration of the word and sacraments, therefore they
 cannot

cannot commit it to others; and yet you allow our princes to be the appointers of bishops, who entrust others with it. And is not this, without evasion, in the most extensive sense, committing the trust of the ministry of the whole church to the prince; since no man can administer the word and sacraments therein, unless licensed by those whom the prince qualifies for that purpose, by making him a bishop, *under himself*, in that church, of which *He* is the head.—Our church is no way on a foot with that of the antient *Jews* (unless in relation to the *tythes* of the Levites :) and *their* church can never be a pattern for *ours*, till our priests are appointed first by God, and then take their function by birth. Queen *Elizabeth*, you prove from the same article, challenged no other prerogative than what God in Scripture gave to all godly princes. This makes nothing to your purpose; nor can I say any more to such a general charge, than that their typical ceremonies were established by *Moses* and *Aaron*, in a very particular manner: but our church is wholly model'd on a more spiritual foundation, by Christ, *without one of the offices or ordinances* about which we are now disputing.

(P. 17.) “As the article refers to the *injunctions* “of *Queen Elizabeth*, to the *injunctions* let us go:” [With all my heart, Doctor; but pray take me in your hand:] “where we find the same thing asserted as in the article, viz. that the queen chal-
“ length

"length no authority or power of ministry of
 "divine service (*i. e.* the word and sacraments)
 "in the church——nor any other authority than
 "that which was challenged——by king Henry VIII.
 "and king Edward VI.."——Your telling us, in
 explanation of this, that king Henry, in his letter
 to the clergy of the province of York, says, *That*
the ministration of the sacraments was by Christ com-
mitted to priests, bears but little weight, when we
 have read the indisputable answer in the commis-
 sions taken out by the bishops in that and the fol-
 lowing reign (which appear to be too glaring even
 for yourself to overlook) acknowledging, "*That*
 "*all jurisdiction, ecclesiastical as well as civil, flowed*
 "*from the king as its original source, and that they*
 "*beld their bishoprics only during the king's plea-*
 "*sure.*"——Those who made this acknowledg-
 ment, certainly were bishops upon these condi-
 tions; and consequently unable to transmit any
 other authority to their successors than what they
 possessed themselves, which would deprive our
 present bishops of *any* power, besides what came
 from the king; even supposing (as you would fain
 have it believed) that *ordination alone makes a bishop*.
 This is so very full, that all farther dispute seems
 unnecessary: However, since you lay so much
 stress, by a regiment of staring capitals, on some
 words in the instrument taken out by bishop Bon-
 ner, I will have them to look at in your own
 dress, *viz.* "*We license you to do in our stead, in our*
 "name,

“ name, and in our authority, whatsoever things do
 “ in any ways appertain to the episcopal authority
 “ and jurisdiction, EXCEPT AND ABOVE
 “ THOSE THINGS WHICH WE AC-
 “ KNOWLEDGE TO HAVE BEEN COM-
 “ MITTED TO YOU OF GOD BY THE
 “ TENOR OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.”

If you would give me leave to alter the face of this, and put the first sentence in capitals, it would then stand much fuller to my purpose than it now does to your's: For, by a bishop's being commissioned to do his office in the KING's STEAD, and in the KING's NAME, he certainly *ordains* a priest *in the king's stead*, and *in the king's name*; that, I think, being part of his office; and consequently the priest so ordained, has his authority really from the king, and not from the bishop, otherwise than as an instrument in the king's hand. I can by no means agree with your saying, That if there be any sense in these words, it is, that bishops have an authority vested in them by Christ, *distinct* from any they can receive from christian princes: because you will hardly assert, they have it immediately from Christ, but *successively* from the *maker* of bishops; either the pope, king, &c. according to the custom of different nations. — Your striving to lose the sense of these words, (P. 20.) *We license you to ORDAIN*, and telling us, bishop Burnet was mistaken when he represents the king to be the fountain of

all power, is much below a gentleman of your rank; and your wresting the word *power* into *jurisdiction*, and *jurisdiction* into *magistracy*, and *magistracy* into *civil effect*, and *civil effect* into *nothing*, is something so novel and unanswerable, that, I believe, I had better avoid a reply, lest we should both give equal occasion to be laughed at.—But, however, I agree with your learned conclusion, (P. 21.) “That there is *some* difference “between a *bishop* or a *priest*, a *supervisor* or com-
“*mon exciseman*.”

I am surprised you should so exalt your voice against those gentlemen, who say the clergy by *oath* acknowledge their *whole authority* flows from the king; which you most profoundly assert, is a wicked abuse on simple minds, and can scarcely be matched by any example. Pray, good Sir, where the *wickedness*, where the *abuse*? What in these words to deserve such language? To say the priest has his power *in the church* from the king the *head of the church*, “is such a *wickedness* as is “*scarce to be matched by example!*” What more could you say on the most inhuman act? Would not these words stand very naturally after a massacre of the whole nation?—And by this violent outcry, can you hope to blind our eyes, or captivate our senses, from seeing, that this *matchless wickedness* is only a *truth*, which every sober impartial man (though a *priest*) must own.—Not only your *oath*, but the *nature of your office*, prove
you

you to be subservient members to your *head* in Christ: And it would be a *wicked abuse*, indeed, to make us simple laymen believe your *power* was independent of the king, who gives powers to those, who, *by virtue thereof*, and not otherwise, give it you.—These warm breathings on such light, or rather on no occasion, betray your designs, and reduce your *power*, more than all the ludicrous representations of modern free-thinkers, and does more for their cause than themselves can.

Passing in silence what requires no answer, let me ask you, what good you think you have done to the argument of succession, by saying, (P. 24.) “That an interruption in the series of bishops concerns us not: and, as the present bishops are in possession, let those who would dispossess them, make a better claim?”—

I have the charity to think, that none who dispute their *claim*, desire their *office*.—But, immediately after this, is it not odd to hear you say, (P. 24.) *Interruptions there have been, you confess, in the succession of bishops*; and still stranger in you to assert, That though a man, not canonically ordained, should *intrude* himself into a bishopric not vacant, yet he is nevertheless a bishop, and his episcopal acts valid; *his power* not flowing from the rules of the church, but the laws of Christ? What you here make of the *christian church*,

church, or the laws of Christ, I know not. If an aspiring minister can *push himself* on the power and gifts of a bishop, and thereby gain equal authority from Christ with one properly constituted, what can we think of the church he governs ! or the doctrine men preach by his appointment !— Besides, is not this notoriously confusing yourself ? If a bishop has his *power* by succession from the apostles, as you say he has ; how can a man, appointed to that dignity by nothing but his own *unlawful ambition*, inherit the same gifts with one canonically constituted, then in possession of the see ?—But we shall soon see what drew you into this absurdity.——

(P. 26.) You carry it with a very high hand, when you assert, That there is never a man of *common sense* in England, who will say there ever was any such thing as a bishop without *episcopal ordination* ; and yet, the page before, you say, That a bishop uncanonically ordained, who forcibly *thrusts himself* into a see not vacant, is not therefore *no bishop*.——I am willing here to believe, that your extreme zeal for, and great interest in, the argument you are handling, has clouded your discernment, and plunged you into such a heap of incoherencies and contradictions : You say and unsay, and all for the good of your brethren, without considering that we weak-minded laymen (for whose benefit you declare you write) have not the same motive and *weighty* reason to
by as

byass our judgments, which side soever of the argument is uppermost; so that we cannot, with you, forget what was said on t'other side of the question, perhaps but ten lines before.——I wonder you should say, Not one man of *common sense* in England will say, there ever was a bishop not episcopally ordained; when I can hardly help thinking, upon reflection, you might recollect several, who are not ashamed to say so in public. But certain it is, that many there are, many legal successors to the apostles in the church of Rome, who allow not one of our present national bishops to be bishops at all, though they have the executive power of the office.——Many of these are men of *common sense*, and there are men of *common sense* who think almost every thing: 'Tis a wild charge, Doctor, and sits but oddly on the cloth!

I cannot bring myself to think the reformed clergy's deriving their orders or power from the idolatrous church of Rome, of so little signification as you make it: "The fact, you say, (P. 28.) is
 " allowed. The church of England *had* her orders from the church of Rome, and it is her
 " glory she had it from legitimate hands; whether
 " corrupted or uncorrupted. I say, *legitimate hands*:
 " For what have the *corruptions* of any church to do
 " with the conveyance of the *ministerial authority*?
 " Were bishops no bishops, because through *ignorance*, or *wickedness* (if you please) they *adulterated*

“rated the true gospel doctrines? As reasonably
 “may you say, That a steward is *no* steward, be-
 “cause he accepts false coin, or embezzles his ma-
 “ster’s goods.”

Why the church of England should glory in having her orders from the erroneous church of Rome, I cannot conceive: and why, for the sake of boasting of an extravagant and romantic succession from the apostles, you should assert the most wicked man a legitimate *christian bishop*, is still more surprising. The absolute necessary qualifications to form a common christian, are *purity of morals* and *holiness of life*: If he becomes openly and incorrigibly licentious, he ceases, in the eye of the church, *to be a christian*; is renounced, and denied even christian burial. Shall then a *christian bishop*, in whom all virtues ought to abound, to the example of our directors and guides, and to the purification of the whole church; whose only and alone accomplishments for that high and holy station, are a thorough subjection of his passions, a regard for futurity, and a contempt of the follies of the present life. Shall he, disregarding all these necessary qualifications, and abandoning himself to vice and folly, nay, to blood and rapine, be a *legitimate minister* and guide to lead to that holy and divine being, whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity? and undertake to direct us to that blessed kingdom, into which we are assured, from indisputable authority, no unclean

unclean thing can enter?——This method of arguing your succession, is not only notoriously repugnant to the *sense of scripture*, and the *nature of the thing*; but also so contradictory to *common sense*, that I should blush to undertake confuting it, did you not swim in such raptures when you unhappily chance to mention it; whilst even your own words and citations, but a few pages before, are more than a sufficient answer to all that can be urged on this head, by yourself or any of your most zealous brethren.——You first quote (P. 8.) St. Paul, where he charges Timothy to commit what he had told him to *faithful men*; and where he also bids Titus ordain such to be elders (which you explain to be bishops and priests) as were *blameless, sober, just, holy, temperate*;——and then you add, as an inference from it, That they *will chuse* (P. 9.) “such persons, as by the *soundness of their faith*, and the *sobriety of their lives*, “were fittest for this divine trust.” Now, Sir, if *soundness of faith*, and *sobriety of life*, made a man *fit* for this important office, in the time of the apostles; can an ignorant or wicked man be *fit* for it? Nay, *can* he, being *wicked*, discharge this *holy trust* any time after? Is it possible, that *he* can inherit that power, and transmit that to others, which never was given but to true members of Christ’s mystical body and church, which no *wicked* man can be, whilst he remains such?—After all the Scripture Anathema’s against the

evil-doer, is it not strange to hear a *legal doctor* of the *christian church* asserting, That the holy and divine gifts of the ministry are never the less existent in a man once ordained a priest, by reason of his *errors* and *wickedness*, than it would be, should he keep himself ever so conformable to the real christian discipline! — Does not God, in the *holy scripture*, declare, that the heart must be clean which he inspires? Do you think a Roman bishop can either inherit or bestow the power of Christ's ministry at his own pleasure, without conforming to the rules upon which it ever hath been, and always will be granted? that is, in plain terms, whether the Almighty will or no? since he has often renounced every worker of iniquity, even from being a member of his community, much more from being an inheritor of those gifts which ever were the reward of distinguished and exemplary piety; and which, through the whole Scripture, appears not indeed given to *every holy man*, but never given, or continued, where *holiness was wanting*. — But, waving much more that will offer to every common reader on this head—

Is it not somewhat unaccountable to see our clergy so warmly blame, and pretend to renounce all the other doctrines of the church of Rome, whilst you so strenuously assert the legitimacy of their succession to the apostles; for no other reason,

son, as men must see, than to give you a little more imagined *power* to boast of? Were it not much better, doctor, to renounce all relation to them in this respect; and venture, if possible, to stand on the foundation that can never fail, *a faith in Christ, according to the Scriptures, and lives answerable thereto?* — Any thing else, however high it may sound in the ears of the unwary or ignorant, and puff your own vanity and imagination, be assured, can never prevail with the candid and judicious, nor persuade thinking men into a belief of your authority.

Nay, if our present bishops derive not their authority and *power* from this *appointment of the crown*; what will they alledge in answer to the claims of the nominal bishops, whom the church of Rome successively presents to each see in these kingdoms, as regular successors to the bishops before the reformation, from whence our clergy, too weakly, are so fond of deriving their *powers*? — Or, were it possible to obviate this difficulty, what can they say to the nonjuring bishops, and their successors, who, by influence of state, were deprived of their bishoprics, and their authorities given to men more in the interest of the then new government? Is not this sufficient to evince to every one, that bishops really and plainly take their growth from the state; and are such, to no visible effect, any longer than they act in conformity to it?

Your parallel, between a *minister of Christ* and a *steward*, is unnatural, in the manner you use it. — You affirm, *We might as well say, a steward is no steward, because he embezzles his master's goods, or accepts false coin; as that a minister ceases to be a minister, because of ignorance or wickedness.* — Pray, doctor, does not a steward, so acting, justly deserve to be dismissed his employment? Nay, when detected, is he not discharged from his master's service for such misdemeanour? Would it be reckoned good usage, if, in such case, others, declaring themselves trusty and careful servants, should continue to acknowledge such a person steward, after he is rejected; pay him his rents, as usual; and insist on his receipts being a *legitimate discharge*? — The application of this is too obvious to need my animadversion.

What you say of the church of Rome's transmitting a *pure, divine authority* to ours, tho' *not possessed of it herself*, is too plain to be refuted without laughter; which makes me rather chuse, since you make no medium in this case, to remain one of those *weak heads*, who hold what you call a *sorry objection* to your power, than believe (at least, with you, endeavour to make others believe) that a *corrupt and wicked man*, can be a *holy and good bishop* at the same time!

You say, (*P. 29.*) That a bishop, in *ordaining*, gives a trust to “*preach not his own doctrines,*
“*but those of Christ; therefore, if the person*
“*ordained*

“ordained sees cause to depart from the doctrine
 “of the bishop who ordained him, he is bound to
 “depart from it.”——Suppose he should chance
 to think he had cause to depart from all the said
 bishop holds; according to your doctrine, he is not
 the less a legitimate priest, whether the bishop, or
 himself, be right or wrong!——Pray, Sir, what is
 it then that is transmitted by this ordination? Is
 it only, as you seem to make it here, a *power* to
 boast of, and a liberty to think and do as he
 pleases, without danger of forfeiting his *ministerial*
gift, or authority? Are there not qualifications
 requisite to obtain him this first order? And,
 can you hope to persuade us, that even when he
 is arrived at the holy station of a bishop, he may
 throw all *religion, virtue, and common honesty*, be-
 hind him; shew a *wicked* example to his flock,
 and even bring *false doctrines* into the church;
 and yet remain, in point of his *spiritual powers*,
 as fully capable of his office as the most circum-
 spect, vigilant, and pious among them? As soon
 might the ministerial gift and power be conveyed
 thro’ the hands of a person who had never been or-
 dained; nay, surely, much more probably, the
 unordained person, if a man of a *holy life*, comes
 nearer the scripture conditions.

The article of *Creed-making* (P. 29, 30.) I
 agree with you in, supposing you will leave it to
 every man’s *own understanding*, whether to re-
 gard them or no; as well as to the bishop to

make them according to his "*own understanding*:" You might, had you chose it, have told us, you blame no-body for rejecting them when made, tho' by a hundred bishops; which, as it is a just and generous sentiment, I am willing to believe your's.

You are much to be commended for your lively picture of the *mutual dependency of church and state*; wherein you assure us, (*P. 32.*) That "*whilst the civil and the ecclesiastical powers act in concert, all will be well: the state needs not to envy the church her spiritual authority, whilst churchmen yield that allegiance to kings, which is necessary to give strength and stability to their government.*"

That the church-allegiance is necessary to support a *lawful civil government*, has been indeed experienced by some princes at a very dear rate: But that it *ought to be so*, will not so readily be allowed; since in the beginning it *was not so*. The founder of our religion tells us, it *should not be so*; and numerous examples teach us, that the state is in a very precarious condition, where *it is so*.——What but this imagined share in the legislature, has involved so many princes in the unhappy disputes with their subjects, which have perpetually rendered their reigns and lives tumultuous and successful, and often ended in their ruin?—In these commotions the *priest* has a very great advantage of his *prince*, by having free access to
the

the ears of the whole people, who, perhaps, (as indeed it too often happens) through a prepossession in his favour, mistake *his cause for the cause of God*; and consequently think it their duty rather to adhere to *what he directs*, than to the *true interests of their sovereign, their country, and themselves.*

You say, (P. 34.) That “*priestcraft, spiritual tyranny, domineering over men’s consciences, and the like, are fine words to lead up a cry with, when the clergy are to have the mob raised about their ears, and to be made odious.*”

To this it is easily answered, that the chief, if not all those who have raised, what you here call, a *cry against the clergy*, have happened to be men as undeserving the name of *mob*, as the *holy fraternity* itself: They have been men of *learning, ingenuity, honour and character*, and some of them of considerable figure; who could have no *self-interested* views from their labours, received no stipend for what they taught, and wished no other reward for their generous endeavours to propagate knowledge, and unscale our eyes, than what results to every virtuous mind on doing a good action: Nor is it probable, that their productions appeared, that the *clergy might be despised*; but that *mankind might be informed*: And if the latter design, by the force of truth and reason, should

should produce the former effect, must we, to prevent it, be kept in ignorance? Must *all* mankind be kept in the dark, and be deceived, rather than a *few* should be laughed at, who have the greatest room to laugh in their sleeves at the reverence, and *money*, given them for doing that, which the real ministers of Christ know themselves obliged to do for *nothing*, according to their original institution; or, at least, for voluntary rewards, and not for forced ones?—This, Doctor, I only say by way of supposition; it not being, perhaps, the present case: To evince, that were the contempt of the clergy a natural consequence of *truth's being generally received*, it can be no objection to its propagation.

You say, (P. 34.) “If any should suspect I am fighting with shadows of my own making, let him go to the author of the *Independent Whig*: a writer! of whom I will say nothing; but leave his *works* to speak his *merit*.” A writer, who, I am very willing to believe (and am persuaded the world will for us) has *said more than we can both say*. And whose works have already spoke his merit so well, as to leave nothing for us to add.

Of the clergy, you (P. 35.) “beg leave to say thus much: That never did they deserve ill treatment less than now. No-where is christianity taught in greater purity than in the church
of

“ of England: In no age has it been better de-
 “ fended than in this: In no time have there
 “ been fewer causes of complaints of the beha-
 “ viour of the clergy in point of morals: Never
 “ was there a better disposition in them to pay
 “ duty and allegiance to his Majesty and his
 “ royal family. From whence it is manifest,
 “ that these outrages against the order, are the
 “ effect of mere libertinism, and a general dis-
 “ satisfaction to all revealed religion; against
 “ which some men are so violently bent, that
 “ neither parts, nor learning, nor sobriety, nor
 “ loyalty, nor all the good qualities uniting in a
 “ clergyman, which constitute an amiable cha-
 “ racter, and would gain him honour in any
 “ other situation of life, (no, nor *dignity* added
 “ to these) can secure him from those affronts,
 “ which a man that understands himself would be
 “ ashamed to offer to a common porter. There
 “ are, I trust, some reasonable men still left among
 “ us; and how much these things are for our cre-
 “ dit, or what consequences they may produce,
 “ let such judge.”

Ill treatment I would by no means have the
 clergy, or any other set of men, meet with: nor
 do I apprehend this insinuation just: To make
 enquiry into the merit of their claim to regard
 and contribution, is, surely, no ill treatment;
 since it is our right to know why we are to sup-
 pose them endued with more spiritual authority
 than

than *ourselves*, and whence their right of maintenance derives: But here you could not avoid the beaten tract of your brethren, by crying out against the least query of your *power*. "That the clergy are insulted, the church in danger, and the whole fabric of episcopacy attacked." — Nothing more betrays the weakness of a cause, than its inability to bear scrutiny. Were the clergy themselves, in their own consciences, fully convinced of the validity of their own foundation; it is my humble opinion, they are men of too much candour, to make such clamorous remonstrances against every little offer to discuss their pretensions. Whatever you may think of the modern defences of christianity, it is obvious, all of them have not been written by clergymen: But, allowing they had, alas! it is too evident, that their success is not considerable enough to boast of! — The *morality of the clergy*, in general, is well enough known to convince every man, that, if there never was less reason to find fault, there never was too much occasion to applaud their conduct in this respect. Particular instances I scorn: But whether, in general, their behaviour, as to charity, sobriety, chastity, brotherly love, and hospitality, is answerable to what it must necessarily be, to constitute them what they assume the name of, I forbear to determine. — Their *duty and allegiance to his majesty*, I do not any way dispute; but,

but, perhaps, it may not be more owing to zeal for our civil establishment, than regard to their own interest. Have they not all their *powers* in full force? Their lands and hereditaments (*however acquired*) in the most secure tranquillity? Nay, have they not *commendams* beyond imagination, and *dispensations* in abundance? * * *

* * * * * I am much at

a loss to know what you mean by the *affronts*, which, you say, even *dignity itself* cannot secure a priest from; and yet no man, who understands himself, would offer to a common porter.——

Nor can I conjecture what you glance at in this expression, unless you want the completion of that truly apostolical wish of archbishop Laud:

“ That he hoped to see the day that ne’er a *Jack-*

“ *Gentleman* in the kingdom should dare to stand

“ before a *priest* with his hat on! ”—— For it is

evident, that the vulgar, those who are always supposed to understand themselves *least*, ever

shew most regard to the cloth, and have the

greatest veneration for the present worthy suc-

cessors of the apostles.—— Besides, doctor, you

know the true christian is not to be a flatterer

on any account; and consequently not to con-

form to the regards usually shewn to any men,

who, by some means or other, attained to a pitch

of dignity, farther than his conscience and the

fitness of things require.—— It is this regard to

dignity.

dignity, where the dignity happens to be wrongly placed, that produces the greatest inconvenience to society, and has involved mankind in errors for many ages. Regard to *civil magistrates* is necessary to the well-being of a commonwealth; but other than that, is not absolutely essential to any desirable end. And in all ages and countries, wherein the honours due to priests have been settled, and protected by the state, and the people compelled to obey them; it has always proved the *bane of the people*, and, generally, the subversion and ruin of the government: which sufficiently demonstrates the wisdom of our present constitution; by which, tho' we are obliged to contribute to the support of our clergy, yet we are left to our own choice, whether we will pay them, or their doctrines, any other regard; and are therefore wholly independent on their teachings, unless ourselves think them consonant to the scriptures, and the excellent plan of *christian morality* therein contained. — Were it otherwise; were we forced (as many other nations are) to take our *priests interpretations* of those sacred writings as the *true sense* of them, without daring to declare the least doubt; we should soon see the glorious sun-beam, which has for some years enlightened the understandings, enlarged the ideas, and reformed the sentiments of every ingenuous and well meaning enquirer, begin to eclipse: And our posterity, in a few ages,

ages, would be plunged into as deep an abyfs of error as ever was that from which our most illustrious ancestors extricated themselves; many of them at the price of their *families*, their *estates*, and *lives*.

Upon the whole, doctor, let me entreat you, or any of your brethren, whose zeal for *yourselves* obliges you to appear publicly in defence of *your own order*, to consider, that, when you address your labours of this kind to us laymen, you appeal to those, who not being hood-winked by the opulences of spiritual advantage, have unclouded eyes to read your pleas; and therefore seldom see your arguments so conclusive as the forementioned reasons prevail with your selves to think them. And, above all, let me desire you, especially on such occasions, to avoid such frequent claim to *power* and *authority*: things which to a layman, with a *New-Testament* in his hand, appear no way attendant on a minister of the church, and wholly foreign to the purpose and design of a *christian priesthood*; whose authority was to be of a nature very different from what we see assumed in our time. For be assured, that while churchmen make gain their governing principle of their actions, the laity (especially the more unthinking part of us, which, perhaps, is by much the majority) will not easily be prevailed on to think them in earnest, when they *direct us* to springs of actions purely spiritual;

Spiritual ; without taking one step in the rugged path *themselves*, farther than is productive of some visible and immediate reward in this life ; whilst, at the same time, we are told to expect no recompence for our virtue here, but to depend on a sufficient return to all sufferings hereafter. Nor can it be wondered at, when this consideration has an effect which good men see with concern ; since the bulk of us, being unlearned, and of but common apprehensions, are much sooner moved by *example* than *precept* ; and apt to think a clergyman gives a much more *convincing proof* of the *validity of his commission*, by living a holy and sober life, and shewing a truly christian pattern of *charitable and blameless* conduct ; than by demonstrating, ever so plainly, that archbishop Parker was consecrated in Lambeth-Chapel.

I am,

Reverend Doctor,

Your Most Obedient.

Jan. 31,
1734-5.

Humble Servant, &c.

THE

THE
P O W E R S
Claimed by the
H I E R A R C H Y,
E X A M I N E D.

Occasioned by a late Pamphlet, Entitled,
The P A R A L L E L, &c.
In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

First printed in the Year 1735.

Printed and Published by

W. O. W. E. R. S.

THE

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EXAMINER

Occasionally from the Examiner, London.

The P. A. R. A. L. L. & Co.

Is a LETTER to a FRIEND.

Printed by the

Printed in the Year 1735.



THE
P O W E R S
Claimed by the
H I E R A R C H Y,
EXAMINED.

SIR,

I Have read the pamphlet which you put into my hands, intituled, *The Parallel*; and here send you my thoughts of it, and remarks upon it, as you desired. I must own, that the book is written with a great deal of artifice, with a shew of impartiality, and with some plausible appearances of moderation and temper, which are very well fitted to amuse and deceive: And this, joined with your request, which will always have the force of a command with me, has been the

the chief motive of my taking abroad, and laying open, the author's reasonings.

The learned author founds his *parallel* upon the supposed congruity of his grace the Abp. of Canterbury's opposition to Dr. Samuel Clarke, and the late opposition of his grace of London * to Dr. Rundle : but he might as well have called this the *perpendicular*, as the *parallel*, for any thing it can make to his purpose ; for there is no parallelism at all in the two cases.

Dr. Clarke, so far as I could ever find, was never recommended to a bishopric, and never was opposed in any such personal interest ; nay, I have often heard that the doctor had never any such expectation or interest to make, and that he was very well satisfied with the situation he had in the church : I do not say that I had this from the doctor himself, nor do I believe that he ever deceived his friends.

His grace the Abp. of Canterbury opposed Dr. Clarke's account of the trinity, as thinking it contrary to the doctrine of the church of *England*, and, perhaps, inconsistent with the sense of scripture : But his grace of London opposed and persecuted Dr. Rundle, without charging him with any thing he could support ; or without being able to prove any doctrine or position, as espoused and maintained by him, contrary to what had been received and settled, as *true religion*, by law.

* Dr. Gibson,

There

There is, therefore, no congruity between the two cases, but only this, that both were *oppositions* founded upon weak or insufficient grounds, though one was much more unjustifiable than the other; and herein, I presume, the *parallel* lies. And I shall here venture to say, that it will appear, upon farther examination, that this learned writer has proved nothing by his *parallel*, but that he and Dr. Henry Sacheverel are two parallel casuists and divines: For though this learned lawyer has a little more artifice, and a deeper disguise; yet I think I am able to prove, that he has no more truth of his side, than the forecited doctor of divinity, and consequently, that they ought to *dangle together* in the same *church mathematics*.

This author, in mentioning Dr. Clarke, could not help speaking of him as a very great and good man, a person of the most extensive learning, and unexceptionable probity: but then, it seems, he was pitied for some "unhappy errors" he had imbibed, or which the too great reliance on his metaphysical way of reasoning, "had carried him into; unhappy! to think with the short line of reason to fathom the depths of eternity, or to comprehend the essence of the godhead, which both faith and reason tell us is incomprehensible."

But this is so far from a just and fair representation of Dr. Clarke's case, as to the share he had in the *trinitarian* controversy, that 'tis the

grossest misrepresentation of it, and a more false or injurious turn to it could not have been given; for so far was this great divine from supporting his scripture-doctrine of the trinity by metaphysical reasonings, that, on the contrary, he laboured as much as possible to bring off his adversaries from this way of reasoning, and to keep to the most plain, unartificial, and unexceptional declarations and testimonies of scripture and the most antient fathers. And his learned antagonist, especially Dr. Waterland, could have had no plea against him, or have stood the argument for one reply, had they not involved themselves in metaphysical subtilties, and impenetrable darkness, by pretending to fathom the unknown and incomprehensible substance and essence of God, of which the scripture speaks not one word, and upon which the matter cannot in the least depend.

I think no learned man in controversy ever was or could be ever driven to a greater distress, than Dr. Waterland, in his argument against Dr. Clarke. He was continually obliged metaphysically to explain away and distinguish himself, out of the plainest, most direct and express testimonies, both of scripture and antiquity: He was forced to assert and maintain, that three persons or intelligent agents, really and truly different and distinct, were yet, considered as united in one undivided substance, but one person, or intelligent agent; that three co-ordinate creators
and

and governors of the world, were but one creator and governor, or, at least, but one God; and that two beings, persons, or intelligent agents, such as God and man must necessarily be, are yet but one person, or one intelligent agent: Which some might think to be, not only the grossest nonsense and contradiction, but even direct blasphemy; as perhaps it must be, abstracting from the metaphysical art of maintaining both sides of a contradiction. But it might well be doubted, whether it could ever be in the power of all the prelates in *Christendom* to instruct men in the right way to salvation, if they must be thus saved by faith in opposition to reason; and if the plain revealed will of God must be farther and more clearly revealed, by *metaphysical* ecclesiastics, into *contradiction* and *mystery*.

Dr. Clarke, in the whole controversy, stood to this plain, practical, and most essential principle of christianity, the *supremacy* of *God the Father*, as the fountain of all authority, and the ultimate terminating object of all religious worship and obedience; that the Son had derived all power and authority from his *God and Father*, and never acted but in his name; and that Christ, when the ends of his mediatorial kingdom and government shall be answered, must again resign all *power and authority* to the *Father*, that *God even the Father*, may be all in all. And this great man plainly proved, that the

christian fathers of the first three centuries continually resolved the unity, not into the unknown incomprehensible substance, or essence of God, but into the *supremacy* of the *Father*, who was, in this sense of *supreme authority* and *worship*, the *only one true God*, and the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and they never ascribed any honour or worship to the Son, but what was due to him by the *will* and *appointment* of the *Father*. Now this is not only scriptural, but a plain intelligible doctrine: There are no *metaphysics* in it, and no *mysteries* to be made a market of.

But I have no intention, here, to enter into any controversy with this author, or any body else, about these matters. I thought it necessary to say thus much, to let the reader see with what fairness he had represented Dr. Clarke, and where the great charge of metaphysical sophistry and obscurity ought to be laid. If the author can shew that I am mistaken, I shall thank him for his pains; but if he cannot, he may take the honour of his own discovery.

The author having just mentioned Dr. Clarke as the parallel, presently drops it, as nothing farther to his purpose; and perhaps it might not have been much beside his purpose, to have let it quite alone, since it is plain that he had something else in view, and that this could be intended only as a blind. The defence of church-power,

power, the jurisdiction of the spirituality independent of the temporality, is the main point; and if men would but agree in this, it would be no great matter what they thought about lesser and more indifferent things: The doctrines of christianity, the claims of the christian people, and the common rights of mankind, are mere trifles when they are set in competition with the *power of the clergy*: The *separate independent power of the Clergy*, in matters *spiritual*, is the *church constitution*; which is so far weakened or subverted, as this power is made dependent on the civil jurisdiction. All appeals to the civil power from processes ecclesiastical, and all prohibitions granted in the civil courts against any such cause or process, are invasions of the spiritual rights and powers of the ecclesiastics; and they who take under their cognizance any such matters or causes in the civil courts, are enemies to the *constitution*: All laws made to recover, strengthen, and confirm this power of the clergy, are in favour of the *constitution*; but laws made to reform and restrain, even the corruptions and abuses of such a power, must, in consequence, tend to subvert, enervate, and destroy the *constitution*.

This, I think, is the secret of the whole affair, and the evident meaning of all this author's propositions, when stript of their ambiguities or disguises, and put into plain *English*.

The incroachments of the temporal courts, from time to time, and the bringing causes ecclesiastical to a hearing and determination before the civil power, is the great grievance and matter of complaint: These ecclesiastics would fain be judge and jury for themselves, and would not submit their claims and pretensions to the same methods of trial and decision with the common rights and liberties of the rest of mankind; and this designing author artfully compliments the judges and lawyers in the civil courts, as men of the greatest abilities and integrity, while he is, at the same time, upbraiding and condemning them for tyranny and injustice in their incroachments and invasions upon the rights of the spirituality, and for making new precedents every day to the prejudice of the clergy. But not to keep any longer in generals, I shall now descend to some particulars in order to shew that I do not here talk altogether without book.

The author of the *Parallel*, having just mentioned a comparison which he could not support, presently drops it; and proceeds, as well as he can, to justify certain passages and positions, which had been quoted out of the preface to the *Codex*, by the author of the *Letter from the Temple*.

I must own, that the author of the *Parallel*, by his artful colourings, has made several of
these

these passages and positions look less odious than they did, or might have done, at first sight: But I think he has not removed the great and main objection to any one of them, which is, the danger that always has, and always must, accrue to any state, by trusting the *church*, or *clergy*, with too much power. The gross and most scandalous abuses of power in the *church*, or by the *clergy*, for eight or nine centuries together, reduced the nation, at last, to the necessity of a reformation; the great benefit of which consisted in throwing off a foreign jurisdiction, and in curbing and restraining the exorbitant claims and powers of the clergy.

'Tis certain and demonstrable, that the distinction between temporal and spiritual power, as now made, is a distinction without a difference; and that it is impossible for two independent powers or jurisdictions, in the same society, to subsist, but that one must weaken or destroy the other, though the one may be called *temporal*, and the other, *spiritual*. To suppose this, would be destroying the king's supremacy, by dividing it from itself, and making the exercise of it a thing impossible and contradictory: For the final decision of all matters in judgment under the king, must terminate and rest somewhere, either in the civil or ecclesiastical courts; and the question now seems to be whether it must be in one, or the other.

There are no matters of moral right and wrong, but are really spiritual, so far as spiritual matters can be subjected to any human cognizance and jurisdiction; and therefore the church, or clergy, must be independent in all matters and causes of moral right and wrong, or in none. And, indeed, grant them but an independency in any thing of this kind, and they will soon claim it in every thing else: Give them but an independent cognizance and jurisdiction in *spiritual matters*, and they will soon hook in all other matters under some pretence or other. And this has always proved true in fact and experience, as often as the church, or clergy, have been complimented with any power independent of the state or civil jurisdiction: And, therefore, thanks be to God, that by the *English* constitution, the clergy have no such independent power; and we ought not only to pray, but to use our utmost endeavours, that they never may have it. Whatever other party distinctions may be of little moment, yet the distinction between the clergy and laity, in point of power, is certainly essential and fundamental to the peace and happiness of mankind.

The clergy, for an independency, had blinded and enslaved all the states and kingdoms in the christian world, while morality and true religion were lost in the scuffle; till at last, the bold and brave efforts of the laity in several parts of *Europe*,

rope, regained some part of their natural and christian rights and liberties: And whether the high-flying clergy, now among us, are not reducing the laity, as fast as they can, and by gradual advances, as the times will bear, to their old blindness and slavery, will be farther considered in following the author of the *Parallel*.

As this author has undertaken to clear up, and remove all objections to the passages and positions, which had been quoted and referred to in the *preface* to the *Codex*, by the author of the *Letter from the Temple*, it will be necessary to call this matter to a little farther account, and to try how well the author of the *Parallel* has herein acquitted himself.

The author of the *Parallel* complains, that the author of the *Letter* had most grossly abused and misrepresented a right reverend prelate, by quoting independent passages out of the *preface* to the *Codex*, which could have had no such obnoxious meaning and construction, had he taken them in their natural order and connexion.

The author of the *Codex* had asserted, “ that
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ral vice or wickedness, which is inconsistent with the good of society, and by which one man injures another, is necessary under every administration and form of government, and that civil peace and property cannot be secured without it, is very certain; and I know no man in his senses, that ever denied this. If this be all that is contended for by these ecclesiastics, I dare say they may be perfectly easy under so wise and righteous an administration as this, even though the power should not be lodged in their hands.

It cannot be said, with any appearance of truth, that the civil jurisdiction, or temporal courts, are defective in punishing vice and immorality, when such matters and causes are brought before them; or that the ecclesiastics in their spiritual courts, have ever done it better, when it has been left to them; but the quite contrary of this has always been known and felt by experience: It must be, therefore, a *vigorous administration* of justice in matters of *church order and discipline*, or a strict and rigorous execution of penal laws in matters of *religion*, and where the ecclesiastics themselves are left to judge of it, independent of the temporal courts, that must be here meant, if any thing at all is to be understood by it. And the *English* laity of every denomination and party, ought well to consider how far the hierarchy have formerly carried this, and what they are pushing at now.

'Tis

'Tis certain that the outward peace, and temporal civil rights of society, must be secured by force or compulsion, because the motives of religion and conscience are not found, under the present corruption of human nature, sufficient to this end: But then 'tis as certain, that so far as men are influenced by such motives and inducements of force and compulsion, they do not, and cannot, act upon the spiritual motives of religion and conscience; nor is it possible that true religion should be promoted and secured by coercion and force, in the *ecclesiastical*, more than in the *civil* courts. Such ecclesiastics, then, in pleading their rights against the civil jurisdiction, may talk of *religion* as long as they please, where men are senseless enough to regard them; but, 'tis very evident, that they mean nothing but their own *temporal power*: And yet experience has sufficiently proved, that they are the unfittest men in the world to be intrusted with such power, and have always made the worst use of it.

The distinction of *civil power* into *temporal* and *spiritual*, has done them infinite service; and, were it not for this distinction without difference, they could have nothing to say: But, by this mechanism of sounds, they keep up a pretension and claim to certain spiritual rights and powers, which are as much temporal rights and powers as any in the world; and in the

nature and reason of the thing, as well as by the English constitution and laws, as much under the *civil jurisdiction*.

The word *constitution*, as now used by these men, signifies the power of the *church* or *clergy*, and all the present abuses of that power; for, substituting here the one for the other, all that they say, will be clear, consistent, and intelligible; but without this, they must be supposed to talk like fools or madmen.

But let us see how this author states and represents the matter, *p.* 7. “Is not the *vigorous*
“*administration* of justice in *temporal* matters,
“which we with so much pleasure observe in
“the sages of the law, who preside in the tem-
“poral courts, one of the greatest supports of
“the government, and to the honour of his ma-
“jesty’s administration? which though it shines
“in lustre in every part, does in nothing more,
“than in that happy and wise choice he makes
“of those who exercise his authority therein;
“men of that extensive knowledge, deep judg-
“ment, sound learning, great patience, and
“unbiaſſed integrity: Why, then, is the eccle-
“siastical ordinary to be censured, for asserting,
“that in such matters which concern the order
“and discipline of the church, the vigorous ad-
“ministration thereof is one of the greatest sup-
“ports to religion, and is to the honour of
“God’s public worship?”

Who

Who now would think, by the character this author here gives of our judges and lawyers in the temporal courts, that he was just ready to charge them with invading the rights and powers of the church, and consequently, of obstructing the necessary course and administration of spiritual justice, by their daily prohibitions in the temporal courts? But who told this learned advocate for church-power, that the ecclesiastical ordinary has any judicial authority, independent of the civil jurisdiction; or that it would be for the honour of *religion*, and of God's public worship, if it had?

Why, my lord Coke, it seems, is his voucher: For he quotes that *great oracle of the law*, to prove, that the *kingdom of England is an absolute empire or monarchy under the king, who exercises an absolute, unlimited power both in church and state*.

It is true, that the king of England is invested by the legislature, or parliament, with the supreme executive power both in church and state: But then he does not exercise this, as the head of an absolute empire or monarchy, but is limited herein by law under the authority of parliament, or of the whole legislature. This learned author must, doubtless, know this; and cannot understand my lord Coke, or the English constitution and laws, in any other sense: And certainly the king's supreme jurisdiction in the church,

church, cannot cut off the right of appeals by law from the ecclesiastical courts, or prevent the civil courts from granting prohibitions, and stopping process in the ecclesiastical court. And I hope that neither this author, nor the right reverend prelate whom he is vindicating, have any intention to flatter the king with an absolute arbitrary power, or to set his majesty at variance with his judges and lawyers in the civil courts. Such methods, indeed, have been used formerly, and with too much success; but 'tis not likely they should take effect now.

Another obnoxious passage in the *preface* to the *Codex*, which had been taken notice of, was this; the author of the *Letter*, speaking of the *great churchman*, says, the power of the *church* is his great aim; and accordingly he thinks it very reasonable, that no bills concerning *religion* " should be preferred or received into the
" *house of commons*, unless the same be first con-
" sidered and liked by the *clergy*."

But here the author of the *Parallel*, to shew how grossly and wickedly the author of the *Codex* had been misrepresented, quotes his own words: " As to the making of laws concern-
" ing religion by the temporality in parliament,
" that is a point not to be touched, for many
" reasons: But I hope it will be no offence to
" mention what has passed heretofore, between
" the *court* and the *house of commons*, upon this
" head;

“ head ; especially since it has been already
 “ published by an eminent member of that house.
 “ May 22, 1572, 14 Eliz. It is signified by the
 “ speaker, that *her majesty's pleasure is, that*
 “ *from henceforth no bill concerning religion shall*
 “ *be preferred or received into this house, unless*
 “ *the same should be first considered and liked by*
 “ *the clergy.*”

Here the author breaks out into this exclamation : “ What now becomes of that dictatorial air wherein they are represented? A recital only of the royal messages in those words which might become a royal mouth, at that time jealous of the supremacy ; a point perhaps not sufficiently considered by the author of the *Letter*. But whether this were reasonable, or not, requires no farther justification, as to this passage, than to say, that it came from the mouth of that great princess, who was, at that time, the glory of the reformation, the support of the protestant interest abroad, the guardian of the liberties of Europe ; steady in her counsels, happy in a wise and able ministry, superior to popular clamours raised by disappointed, disaffected persons, against reason and without foundation.”

Now here the author of the *Parallel* compounds the matter between the two antagonists, in such a manner, that I think it impossible for any

any man to read and understand it, without laughing : For after all his artifice and grimace, he must either give up the argument, or come just to the point which he endeavours so awkwardly to evade. The author of the *Codex* tells us, that *as to the making of laws concerning religion by the temporality in parliament, that is a point not to be touched for many reasons.* What these reasons are, the reader is left to guess at ; but possibly the chief reason might be, that touching upon this point in his own way, must have been denying the constitutional rights and power of parliament, which could not be done without some danger, since even a bishop might have been suspended and degraded for it : But tho' this tender point could not be safely touched, yet 'tis to be hoped that an arbitrary precedent may be given, *without offence* ; and that queen Elizabeth may be justified in straining her prerogative above law, and in setting aside, or overruling, the power and right of the temporality in parliament, from whom she had derived her supremacy, and to whom she owed her crown. But must not any reader in the world think, that the author of the *Codex* approved and justified this act of the queen's, as an exertion of royal power, which ought to be imitated in case of need, or where-ever he should think fit to direct it ?

But

But how does this advocate plead the cause? Why he neither affirms or denies any thing at all about it: He was aware that much might be said on both sides, and there might be some incon-
veniency in speaking out clearly; and therefore he very prudently drops his client with compliments and good wishes, and leaves every body to think of the matter as they please.

Either queen Elizabeth's assuming to herself the whole legislature, as well as jurisdiction in the church, and prohibiting her parliament from receiving any bill, or entering into any debates about religion, without her leave, was right, or wrong: If right, the *Codex* and the *Parallel* might have justified it, without any such round-about-fetches and grimace; but if wrong, to what purpose is it here brought in? And what has the queen's great character in other matters, to do with this? Had not the commons as much reason to be jealous of their authority and share in the legislature, as the queen of her supremacy? Or ought they to have given up the whole constitution and power of parliament to her, because at that time she dreaded the power and influence of the church, and had some reason to be afraid of the popishly-affected bishops and clergy, while the consciences of the people were still too much under their jurisdiction?

But

But I hope we are not now so near the verge of popery, whatever some would make us believe. But perhaps they who raise this outcry, may be more in fear of something else, *i. e.* the sinking power of the *clergy*, and their declining jurisdiction over the consciences of the *laity*; which would be infinitely worse for them than *popery* itself.

But, I believe, I may now venture to leave it to the judgment of any indifferent, unbiassed reader, whether both the author of the *Codex*, and the *Parallel* did not intend to justify this, and other such-like arbitrary assumptions of power in queen *Elizabeth*; and whether they would not recommend it to his present majesty, or any future prince, to follow such precedents, and strain the prerogative after the same manner, in favour of the clergy. However, if they did not intend this, they may easily declare off, and purge themselves from any such imputation, as the natural construction of words seems to lay them under.

The author of the *Letter* had farther observed, that he (the great churchman there spoken of) “ would not have the spiritual courts, prohibited
“ by the courts of *King’s-Bench* and *Common-Pleas*.” To which this author of the *Parallel* replies, that had he (the author of the *Letter*) added, “ but that prohibitions, being original
“ writs

“ writs, should issue from the court of *chancery*.
 “ only, it had lost its sting.”

I must own, that I can see no sting that would have been here lost; but all the strength and venom of the sting in my opinion, still remains.

If the judges in the courts of *King's-Bench* and *Common Pleas* have invaded the king's prerogative, and the rights of the church, let this author plainly tell them so, and not, like an artful sneering sycophant, endeavour to compliment them out of all law and justice. The right of trial by juries has, I think, been always looked upon as one of the most considerable and valuable branches of English liberty; and this, I hope, is a right which the people of England will never part with, or suffer to be wrested from them. The rending the ecclesiastical from the civil power, was the cursed work of the *papacy*, and the main foundation of the anti-christian kingdom; and subjecting the church once more to the *state*, or to the supreme civil power in *parliament*, was the great blessing and advantage of the *reformation*.

'Tis certain that the king derives his prerogative, his supremacy, and all the rights of the crown, from the legislature or parliament; and that all the laws of England are equally the acts of this supreme national power; and therefore none but an ecclesiastical parasite, or tool of church.

church power, could represent the matter otherwise, as if the kingdom of England was *an absolute empire or monarchy under the king.*

By the same right and reason that precedents are brought from queen Elizabeth's assuming an anti-parliamentary power, all the arbitrary measures of the four next reigns might be justified, while the church and crown were combined to enslave and ruin the nation: But this is certainly a wrong time of day to advance such doctrines or precedents, under one of the wisest and best of princes. Every step of his present majesty's government has afforded us a sufficient and most convincing proof that he has no intention of straining the prerogative, of stopping or interrupting the methods of procedure in the civil courts, or of arming the *clergy* with more power against the *laity*.

'Tis well known from the History of England, and of all other nations in Christendom, that the hierarchical clergy have always flattered princes with absolute arbitrary power, in hopes of sharing in it themselves. By this means they have often exposed both their king and country to the utmost hazards; and never was it known when successful struggles of the clergy for temporal power, had not very bad, if not fatal, effects. The History of England, since the reformation, furnishes us with too many instances of this. But I hope an ecclesiastical spiritual jurisdiction over
conscience

conscience will no more push us on so near to the brink of destruction.

Most unhappy would be the case of the people of England, should the spiritual jurisdiction ever be made independent of the temporal, or should the parliament ever think fit to ease the judges in the temporal courts of the trouble of hearing and determining causes in appeal from the courts ecclesiastical: The iniquity, tyranny, and oppression of those spiritual courts, has been always a matter of general grievance and complaint; and I am very well satisfied, that were the whole body of the people to be heard about it, ninety-nine in a hundred, at least, would give their votes for the entire abolition of this *spiritual power*. Nor could the clergy, in such a case, complain of their being deprived of any natural or legal right, or that any anti-constitutional power would be hereby exercised.

Before the reformation, and under the vassalage of popery, the distinction between temporal and spiritual, or civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, was *real*; while the people of England were governed by, or rather rack'd and tortured between, two independent powers, the king and the pope: but the laws made at, and since, the reformation, as the foundation upon which the church now stands, have destroyed this distinction as to the reality of it, by investing the king, as the civil sovereign, with all jurisdiction within these

these realms, of what nature or kind soever. This distinction therefore, as it is now retained and kept up among us, can be merely nominal, when we would express the different exercise of the *same civil jurisdiction*, as it is intrusted either with the *laity* or *clergy*. The chancellors, or judges, in the ecclesiastical courts often have been, and always may be, laymen; and, consequently, the *clergy* here can have no legal claim exclusive of the *laity*. The clergy, I think, would never allow the king to be a bishop, patriarch, or spiritual person; yet they know very well that he is the supreme *head of the church*, and that he is invested, by *law*, with all *spiritual*, as well as *temporal jurisdiction*.

The gentlemen of the hierarchy, till very lately, had always a *jus divinum* for their temporal power; but having been so often baffled and confounded in this argument, they seem now almost ashamed of it: But they still sweat and labour to keep up the real distinction between *temporal* and *spiritual*, or *civil* and *ecclesiastical* power; as if every thing must be presently spiritualized as soon as it falls into their hands. And this they are under a necessity of doing, as a blind to their ambition and avarice, since it must otherwise plainly appear to every vulgar understanding, that they are struggling for temporal power; that they *hunger and thirst not after righteousness,*

business, but *worldly dominion*; and that they are labouring for the *meat that perisheth*, and not for that *which endureth to everlasting life*.

But 'tis evident, from the nature and reason of the thing, that all power and jurisdiction, subject to a human cognizance, must be civil and temporal; and religion and conscience, properly speaking, cannot be brought under any such cognizance or jurisdiction. So far as temporal motives prevail with men, the spiritual motives of religion and conscience cease; and *force* can never be necessary, but where men will not be governed by *reason*. It is likewise, I think, very evident, that two independent powers or jurisdictions, though one might be called *temporal*, and the other *spiritual*, cannot possibly subsist in the same society under any *one* supreme head, any more than under different and opposite supreme heads. This would be dividing the king's authority from itself; destroying the power of parliament, from which it is derived; and exciting an eternal, irreconcilable war between the king's civil and ecclesiastical judges. And the reason of this is plain, since there could be scarce any matter or cause whatever, that the one would claim as *temporal*, but the other might lay in a contrary claim to it, as *spiritual*. And this could never be otherwise, where a distinction should be made without any difference in nature or reason.

reason. Nor is it possible that all the laws in the world should settle the boundaries here, where nature has made none. The parliament, indeed, may commit all power to the ecclesiastics, if they please, and transform the king into a pope; but I presume the experience of past ages has given them but very little encouragement to it. But the parliaments, or legislature, at the reformation, saw the necessity of destroying this distinction in fact, and of making the church absolutely dependent on the state, without leaving them the least pretence or claim to any independent ecclesiastical power.

But all, it seems, that the *Parallel* is concerned for in defence of the *Codex*, is only this, that all appeals from the ecclesiastical courts to the civil, may be prevented by law, under a parliamentary sanction; and that all such appeals, if any such there must be, may be only heard and determined in the court of chancery. This was so *formerly*, or in the times of *popery*; and therefore 'tis very plain, that it ought to be so again. The people of England ought to be cut off from all the right and benefit of a trial by juries, in some of the most considerable branches of their interest and property, or in all such matters and causes as the clergy might call *spiritual*, and think fit to engross to themselves.

A lord chancellor will be always in the king's absolute power; but the country inquests and
juries

juries can never be so; and therefore no doubt but they must be the king's most fast and sure friends, who would compliment him with such a power, and so vast an extent of prerogative. This is the unparalleled modesty of these high-flying protestant ecclesiastics! They only desire to be restored to the exercise of the same power under the *king*, which they *formerly* enjoyed under the *pope*; upon this condition they will never more submit to his catholic holiness, or call in any foreign power to their aid: but if they cannot obtain this, the king and nation are never to expect any rest or peace from them. And yet could they once obtain this most reasonable access of power, they would soon push at something more; for all experience has convinced us, that ambition, especially church-ambition, is restless and insatiable.

Here then the whole scene is opened at once: this is the mystery of the hierarchy: they will stand by the king's supremacy, and be very loyal subjects, if his majesty can but order matters so as to restore them to their antient powers and privileges. This is the scheme to which archbishop Laud died a martyr; and so I hope will a hundred other such bishops, before the project can take effect.

But how comes it about, that the ministers of Christ's kingdom should discover such an unquenchable thirst after worldly power? Is this

the province which their great master had assigned them? Or is this the main business of their holy order? Are they most at leisure to govern the world? Or have not the civil judges and magistrates abilities or inclination to dispense justice without them?

If the judges in the king's bench and common pleas, in king James's time, thought it a burden to hear and determine causes upon appeals from the spiritual courts, 'tis plain that they have since changed their minds, if what this author observes be true, That they are continually, by new precedents, and adjudged cases in law, encroaching upon the business of the ecclesiastical courts, and consequently still loading themselves with more and more trouble. But this is such a ridiculous fetch, that one cannot think of it without laughing: It seems the spirituality would ease the temporality as much as possible from the weight of government, to make their burden the lighter, and save them the trouble of it.

But 'tis needless to insist longer upon an argument that is founded in a jest. It will be time enough to re-consider this matter, when the civil magistrates and judges shall petition to be eased of the trouble of hearing and determining causes, upon appeals from the ecclesiastical courts; or when the author can prove, that justice would be more strictly and impartially executed, in case the

the whole method and course of law, as it now stands, was to be altered in these matters of church power. But, in the mean while, the *laity* may have leave to wish, as well as the *clergy*; and perhaps may have as much reason to wish them less power, as they can have to wish themselves more.

Another exceptionable passage, which had been quoted by the author of the *letter* out of the *preface* to the *Codex*, is this, that the author of the *Codex* thinks, "That, in spiritual matters, the clergy
" may be presumed the most proper judges, both
" of the assistance which the *church* stands in need
" of from the *state*, and the several degrees of it;
" and of the method by which that assistance may
" be most effectually conveyed and applied for
" the service of the *church*: That the legislature,
" by putting the help which it designs for the
" service of the *church*, into the hands of the *laity*,
" does the church a manifest dis-service: That
" where-ever it puts the work, even of the *sup-*
" *pression of vice*, into *temporal hands*, it puts it into
" a channel not so likely to succeed, as in *spiritual*
" *hands*."

Here certainly the great *church* and *statesman* needed a very able advocate; and he who can bring him off, upon the principles of the reformation and revolution, or upon the laws of England, as *now in being*, may, by the same sort of leger-de-main and hocus-pocus, do any thing else. But

let us hear the *Parallel* lawyer plead, who was resolved to say something or other, tho' he could say nothing to the purpose.

Here I must refer you to the learned author's own argument, *Preface*, p. 30, 31. wherein the deductions are plain, and the inferences certain, " If the *spirituality* of this *realm* under his majesty, " as the supreme head, be sufficient in itself, with " out the interposition of any exterior person, in " all matters of a *spiritual nature*, it will follow " from thence, that they are the *most proper judges* " of what assistance the *church* stands in need of " from the *state*; for it is a maxim in law, *Peritis in arte sua credendum est*. If the correction " of manners, and what relates to the order and " discipline of the church, be the proper province " of the ordinary, according to the laws of the " land, as appears from the before-mentioned " passage of the lord Coke in *Codrie's case*, it is " then most likely to succeed in their hands: " And, lastly, if these helps happen to be *unnecessary*, or *unduly applied*, as the learned author " expresses it, it likewise follows, that they do " no service, but a manifest dis-service, to the " church."

No doubt but the *spirituality* of this *realm* are sufficient in themselves, and without any exterior person, to govern not only the *church*, but the *state* or nation too. They have the true *spirit of govern-*

government, and have always made the best of power; and therefore they are the *most proper* judges of what power they are fit to be entrusted with. They best understand the distinction between *temporal* and *spiritual power*, in this protestant state, since the *reformation*; and are therefore the fittest men in the world to explain it, and fix the boundaries of both these jurisdictions for the temporality, or *laity*.

This is the *Parallel's* plea, and his defence of the *Codex*; and they who think it insufficient, cannot be true churchmen.

But suppose that the legislature, at the reformation, should have destroyed this distinction between the temporal and spiritual powers, as to the reality of it, or its effect in judicature: Suppose the parliament at that time, and ever since, should have assumed all power and authority within this realm, as a *civil authority*, and invested the king with the supremacy in the church, not as a *spiritual* person, but as the *civil sovereign*; why then the distinction of temporal and spiritual power would be lost in law, as there never was, or could be, any such distinction in the nature and reason of things.

The pretensions to an *ecclesiastical* or *spiritual*, as distinct from the *temporal* or *civil* power, cannot possibly consist with the principles of the reformation, or with the laws and constitution of this realm. The bishops and clergy of this na-

tion are all subject to the civil power, in their most spiritual capacities; and 'tis impossible they should derive any *spiritual* power or jurisdiction from the king, which the king himself has not derived from the *temporality* in parliament.

That the church or clergy, as such, can have no legislative power, is plain, since they cannot sit or act, in convocation, but by the king's *parliamentary authority*; nor can any of their spiritual canons or constitutions become valid or binding, without a parliamentary sanction: and as they have no right of legislation, so neither have they any spiritual jurisdiction distinct from, or independent of, the civil power.

There are no acts of jurisdiction, how spiritual soever they may be thought or called, that are exercised by the *ecclesiastics* within this realm, but what may be as legally and duly exercised by the *laity* or *temporality*; and herein the temporality has the superiority and independency by law, that they can hear and determine causes upon appeals from the spirituality, in all matters whatever that may come into judgment under the king as the supreme civil sovereign. And from hence it is plain, that the clergy can have no independent, distinct, or exclusive jurisdiction; and that whenever they exercise any manner of power or jurisdiction whatever within this realm, they must act as *civil officers* under the king. This is so very evident, that no man of moderate reading, and

acquaintance with the laws and constitution of the church of England, since the reformation, can doubt of it. But because the *hierarchy* have always made so great a noise about their independent, separate, and distinct powers, it may not, perhaps, be unnecessary to consider and clear up this matter a little farther, especially as they have hereby so greatly imposed on and abused the weakest and most unthinking part of the laity.

The 37 Henry VIII. declared, “ That arch-
 “ bishops, bishops, archdeacons, and other eccle-
 “ siastical persons, have no manner of jurisdic-
 “ tion ecclesiastical, but by and under the king’s
 “ majesty, the only undoubted supreme head of
 “ the church of England, to whom, by holy
 “ scripture, power and authority is given to hear
 “ and determine all manner of causes ecclesiasti-
 “ cal, and to correct all vice and sin whatsoever,
 “ and to all such persons as the king’s majesty
 “ shall appoint thereunto; and that all *laymen*,
 “ being *doctors of law*, &c. being constituted
 “ chancellors, &c. may lawfully exercise and
 “ execute all manner of jurisdiction *commonly*
 “ *called ecclesiastical*, and all censures and co-
 “ ercions appertaining or any way belonging to
 “ the same: *Reciting, at the same time*, that the
 “ bishop of Rome, and his adherents, minding
 “ utterly, as much as in them lay, to abolish,
 “ obscure, and delete the power given to the
 H 4 “ princes

“ princes of the earth, that thereby they may
 “ gather and get to themselves the government
 “ and rule of the world, had made divers ordinances,
 “ that no *layman* should or might exercise or
 “ occupy any jurisdiction ecclesiastical, lest their
 “ false and usurped power, which they pretend-
 “ ed and went about to have in Christ’s church,
 “ should decay, wax vile, and be of no reputa-
 “ tion, &c. Which being directly repugnant to
 “ the king’s majesty, as supreme head of the
 “ church, and prerogative royal, his grace be-
 “ ing a layman. And albeit the said ordinances
 “ are utterly abolished, yet, because the con-
 “ trary is not put in practice, Be it enacted,
 “ &c.”

And though the bishops and clergy, in convo-
 cation, had owned this supreme *civil jurisdiction* in
 matters *spiritual* or ecclesiastical; yet for the far-
 ther strengthening and confirmation hereof, the
 parliament of 26 Henry VIII. c. 1. enacts, “ That
 “ the kings of this realm, from time to time,
 “ shall have full power to reform and correct all
 “ errors, heresies, enormities, offences, abuses,
 “ and contempts, whatsoever they be, which,
 “ by any manner of spiritual authority, or ju-
 “ risdiction, ought or may be lawfully reform-
 “ ed.”

And the commission to Cromwell, 31 Hen. VIII.
 c. 10. who was, by act of parliament, placed
 above the archbishop of Canterbury, was as full
 and

and home to the purpose as words could make it, for the king's civil supremacy in ecclesiasticals.

And in the next reign, 1 Edward VI. c. 2.
 " All authority of jurisdiction spiritual is drawn
 " and deducted from the king's majesty, as supreme head of the churches of England and
 " Ireland, and so justly acknowledged by the clergy of these realms." And this act being revived by 1 Jac. I. c. 25. is a new parliamentary acknowledgment of the *regal* or *civil* supremacy in that reign.

And by 1 of queen Elizabeth, intituled, *An act to restore to the crown the antient jurisdiction over the state ecclesiastical and spiritual*, it is established and enacted, " That such jurisdictions, privileges, superiorities, and pre-eminences, spiritual and ecclesiastical, as by any spiritual or ecclesiastical power and authority have hitherto been, or may lawfully be, exercised or used for the visitation of the ecclesiastical state and persons, and for the reformation, order, and correction of the same, and of all manner of errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, shall for ever, by authority of this present parliament, be united and annexed to the imperial crown of this realm." And this clause is again repeated and confirmed in 8 Eliz. c. 1. And the more effectually to oblige the clergy and all others to acknowledge this *regal* or

civil supremacy, in matters *spiritual* and *ecclesiastical*, in 1 Eliz. c. 1. it is enacted, “ That, for the
 “ better observation and maintenance of this act,
 “ all that take orders or degrees in the universities,
 “ and all that have any office under the govern-
 “ ment, are to take the *oath of supremacy*.” In
 which they acknowledge, “ That the queen is the
 “ supreme governor in all spiritual or ecclesiasti-
 “ cal things and causes; and that they will, to
 “ their power, assist and defend all jurisdictions,
 “ privileges, pre-eminences and authorities, grant-
 “ ed or belonging to the queen, her heirs and suc-
 “ cessors, as united to the imperial crown of this
 “ realm.”

And as queen Elizabeth was invested with this power and authority, which had been granted by parliament in her father's and brother's reigns; so the same regal or civil authority is continued down to this day, with this great advantage, that the *high-commission* court, which made the prince judge of original causes, and thereby prevented the benefit of appeals, is abolished by 13 Char. II. c. 12. Whether some men, now in great power, and from whom the church or clergy seem to have high-raised hopes, may not be for restoring this court, or something equivalent to it, may be a matter of farther enquiry: But however that may be, this does not, as that act declares, *abridge or diminish the king's supremacy*, or hinder, but that all spiritual causes, which can be tried by any bishop
 or

or other spiritual person whatever, are finally determined by judges delegated by the king, who exercise all manner of ecclesiastical censures, without having so much as any priest to pronounce their sentence: For how could the archbishop himself, or any by his authority, pretend to pronounce a sentence in a cause which is appealed from him to a superior judge? Should the king's delegates suffer this, they must betray the regal or civil authority, upon which they act. In short, if the king can revoke any spiritual censures of the bishops or archbishops, or any other ecclesiastical persons; nay can, by his proclamation, pardon all excommunication, and restore people to the communion of the church; it shews that there is no branch of *spiritual* power, which is not *civil*, and by a *parliamentary* authority vested in the king.

But it would be tedious and endless to enumerate all the instances and acts of parliament, in which the independency and supremacy of the civil or temporal power is asserted and maintained: Our parliaments always stood to this before, as well as since the reformation. The authorities which I have produced, may, I presume, be sufficient to prove, that we have no power in England independent of, co-ordinate with, or distinct from the temporal or civil power; in which the king is invested by law, or by acts of parliament, with the supreme jurisdiction. The

kingdom of England is not an absolute empire or monarchy under the king; but a limited monarchy by law, and under the supreme authority and inspection of parliament: and they cannot be friends, either to the king, or to the nation, who would insinuate otherwise, from certain unguarded passages out of my Lord Coke, and some acts of arbitrary power exercised by queen Elizabeth.

As this wall of partition between the power of temporal and spiritual persons, was taken away and removed at the reformation; so it is impossible to restore or rebuild it, without reducing the nation to the same, or as bad a state of bondage as before.

That the clergy themselves are the fittest judges in all spiritual matters, *i. e.* in all such temporal and civil matters of human jurisdiction, which relate to their own interest, in opposition to the laity, is such an exorbitant and insolent pretence, that a man must divest himself of all sense of honour or shame, before he can make such a claim, and stand to it, or persist in it. Would it not be more for the service of the church, that no appeals at all should be admitted from the ecclesiastical courts? But if any such appeals must be allowed, why should the court of chancery alone be put to this drudgery? or be exposed to the odium of being a *high-commission* court for the *benefit of the clergy?* and

and why should the people of England be hereby cut off from all benefit of trial by God and their country?

But the great and learned author of the *Codex*, it seems, does not directly assert, "That in *spiritual matters* the clergy may be presumed the most proper judges, both of the assistance which the church stands in need of from the *state*, and of the several degrees of it; and of the method by which that assistance may be most effectually conveyed and applied for the service of the church." This is not absolutely asserted and maintained: But *IF the spirituality under the king be sufficient*, in this case, and *IF the clergy, in those matters, are the most proper judges*; why then these deductions are plain, and the inferences certain. Now this is a fine fetch indeed. If a thing be true and right, which cannot possibly be so, why then the *Parallel* has vindicated the *Codex*: But not upon any other supposition whatever, as he himself owns.

But even so clear and demonstrable as this is, from the nature and reason of things, it could not be let pass without some *legal proof*; and therefore a statute is quoted for it, made under a popish reign, and by a popish parliament, 24 Henry VIII. c. 12. § 1. which statute declares, "That the realm of England is an empire—governed by one supreme head or king,—the body spiritual whereof having power, when any cause
" of

“ of the *law divine* happened to come into ques-
 “ tion, or of *spiritual learning*, that it was de-
 “ clared, interpreted, and shewed, by, that part of
 “ the said body politic called the *spirituality*, now
 “ being usually called the English church, which
 “ always has been reputed, and also found of
 “ that sort, that, both for knowledge, integri-
 “ ty, and sufficiency of number, it hath been al-
 “ ways thought, and is also at this hour sufficient
 “ and meet of itself, without the intermeddling
 “ of any exterior person or persons, to declare
 “ and determine all such doubts, and to admini-
 “ ster all such offices and duties as to *their rooms*
 “ *spiritual doth appertain*.—And the law tem-
 “ poral, for the trial of *property of lands and goods*,
 “ and for the *conservation of the people of these*
 “ *realms* in unity and peace, without *rapine* and
 “ *spoil*, was and yet is administered, adjudged,
 “ and executed, by sundry judges and mini-
 “ sters of the other part of the said body poli-
 “ tic called the *temporality*; and both their autho-
 “ rities and jurisdictions to conjoin together in
 “ the due administration of justice, the one to
 “ help the other.”

One would think, that the author of the *Pa-
 rallel* must certainly have quoted this statute only
 in jest: For though it was made by a popish par-
 liament, and under a popish reign, yet it really
 contains nothing at all to his purpose. The two
 parts of the body politic are, indeed, here distin-
 guished

guished into the *temporality and spirituality*; but then all temporal power, all judgment and jurisdiction in matters of *property*, either of *lands or goods*, is here given to the temporality: and as the church or clergy are a part of the *body politic*, must not their *property* too, their *lands and goods*, be subject to the same *civil jurisdiction*? The clergy, indeed, in their spiritual capacity, by their spiritual advice, exhortations, and good examples, may help the civil power in the *administration of justice*, as the statute allows; but not, I hope, by any distinct or independent civil jurisdiction of their own, as *spiritual persons*. We may therefore grant this author all that this statute allows him: but surely if he intended nothing else, he should never be my advocate in a like case; for I should not care to have any cause of mine thus exposed to laughter and ridicule.

But is this the *vigorous administration of justice* in matters of order and discipline, heresy and schism, so much laboured and longed for? Is this all the church-power which has been so often felt, and which is still so much dreaded? Or have mankind been frightened out of their wits only in such a panic? I should be glad to tell such good news, with any appearance of probability.

Another passage, which had been quoted by the author of the *Letter from the Temple*, out of the *Preface to the Codex*, is this: "That he (the
author



author of the *Codex*) “conceives that temporal
 “penalties may be useful in *matters of religion*;
 “and that the only way to make them truly be-
 “neficial to religion, is to provide them, as a
 “farther *terror and punishment*, to be called in,
 “as oft as the censures of the church are dis-
 “obeyed.”

Upon this the *Parallel* advocate throws him-
 self into fits of astonishment and indignation; and
 thus he expresses his wonder and his rage:—

“And is it possible that any gentleman of the
 “*Temple*, who looks into his book of statutes,
 “especially since the reformation, can conceive,
 “that *temporal penalties* may not be useful in
 “*matters of religion*, both to the *Church* and
 “*State*? That they may not be a guard against
 “those extremes, between which our church is
 “so happily situate, against the libertinism of
 “infidelity on the one hand, and the supersti-
 “tion of popery on the other? That they may
 “not be a guard against immorality and pro-
 “faneness; against those impious principles,
 “which, as the law declares, greatly tend to
 “the dishonour of Almighty God, and may
 “prove destructive to the peace and welfare of
 “the kingdom? The suppression of which is
 “the utmost extent or consequence aimed at,
 “by the principles laid down by our learned
 “author?”

But

But can any man read this, or any such-like artifice and jargon, without laughter and contempt? For if the author here answers any thing to the purpose, or may be understood in any consistent sense, it must be this: Can any man look into his book of statutes, without seeing plainly and clearly the nature, reason, and fitness of things? Or will any man dare to say that the statutes, at least since the reformation, are not the certain infallible rules and standard of true religion? Can it be denied, that outward force has a power over conscience? Or that temporal penalties cannot alter the inward judgment? Who would be so fool-hardy as to affirm, that men may not be *saved by force*? Or their understandings may not be enlightened, and their hearts mended, whether they will or no? Will any man be so wicked as to say, that Christ did not provide sufficiently for the salvation of souls? Or that he did not, to this purpose, intrust his ministers with an adequate *temporal power*? If any man should here dare to dispute the power of Christ and his church, let him *ipso facto*, stand excommunicate. Thus roars the Leviathan; and they who will not be terrified with this *temporal thunder*, let them take care of *eternal damnation*. But as I cannot here express myself better, I shall conclude this topic of discourse in the strong comprehensive words of a most excellent and right reverend prelate of our church.

“ *Authority*

“ *Authority* is the greatest and most irrecon-
 “ cileable enemy to *truth* and argument, that
 “ this world ever furnished out since it was in
 “ being. All the sophistry, all the labour of
 “ *plausibility*, all the *artifice* and *cunning* of
 “ the *subtilest* *disputer* in the world, may be laid
 “ open and turned to the advantage of truth,
 “ which they are designed to hide or to depress:
 “ but against *authority* there is no defence. It is
 “ *authority* alone which keeps up the *grossest*
 “ *errors* in the countries around us; and where
 “ *truth* happens to be received for the sake of
 “ *authority*, there is just so much diminished from
 “ the love of *truth*, and the glory of *reason*, and
 “ the *acceptableness* of men to God, as there is
 “ attributed to *authority*. It was *authority* which
 “ crushed the *noble sentiments* of *Socrates*, and
 “ others in the heathen world; and prevented
 “ the reception of them among men: It was
 “ *authority* which hindered the voice of the *Son*
 “ of *God* himself from being heard, and which
 “ alone stood in opposition to his powerful argu-
 “ ments and his *divine doctrine*; whilst it was a
 “ more moving question among the people, to
 “ ask, Do any of the *Pharisees* or *doctors* of the
 “ *Mosaic law* believe in him? than to ask, Whe-
 “ ther any man ever spake, or lived, or worked
 “ wonders like him? and whilst *excommunica-*
 “ *tion*, or being put out of the *synagogue*, was
 “ the mark set upon those who should embrace
 “ his

" his *religion*. It was *authority* among the
 " heathens, which afterwards put all the stop to
 " Christ's profession, which this word could put.
 " And when *christians* were increased into a ma-
 " jority, and came to think the same method to
 " be the only proper one for the advantage of
 " their cause, which had been the enemy and
 " destroyer of it; then it was, that the *autho-*
 " *rity of christians*, by degrees, laid waste the
 " honour of *christianity*, and well nigh extin-
 " guished it from among men. It was *authority*
 " which brought in all the merciless heap of
 " useless and burthensome fopperies; prayers in
 " an unknown tongue, prayers to multitudes
 " of beings, and the whole load of *absurdities*
 " and depravations of *true religion*, under which
 " the *christian* people were in captivity; till
 " they became gross and weighty enough at last
 " to break the props that supported them. It
 " was *authority* which would have prevented
 " all *reformation*, where it is; and which has
 " put a barrier against it, wherever it is not. It
 " was human *authority*, or *religion*, which alone
 " set up itself against the beginning of this
 " *Church* of England itself; and which alone
 " contests with it the foundation upon which it
 " stands. *This authority* was, at first, exercised
 " in *little*, by those who were so far from pre-
 " tending to such *enormities* as it afterwards ar-
 " rived at, that they would have detested and
 " ab-

“ abhorred the thought of them : and so it will
 “ be for ever, and every where. The calling in
 “ the assistance of more authority, even against
 “ errors, or trifles in religious matters, at first,
 “ will, by insensible degrees, come to the ve-
 “ ry same issue that it has been ever hitherto
 “ seen to end in : And how indeed can it be
 “ expected, that the same thing, which has in
 “ all ages, and in all countries, been hurtful to
 “ truth and true religion among men, should in
 “ any age, or in any country, become a friend
 “ and guardian of them ; unless it can be shewn,
 “ that the nature of mere authority, or the na-
 “ ture of man, or both, are entirely altered from
 “ what they have hitherto been ; for it is not
 “ in religion as it is in the civil concerns of hu-
 “ man life. The end of human society is an-
 “ swered by outward behaviour and actions ;
 “ which therefore ought to be restrained and go-
 “ verned by civil authority : But the end of re-
 “ ligion, and of the christian religion in particu-
 “ lar, is destroyed, just in proportion to the in-
 “ fluence of great names, and to the effect of world-
 “ ly motives, and mere authority of men, sepa-
 “ rated from the arguments of reason, and the mo-
 “ tives and maxims of the gospel itself.”

This, I think, is a sufficient demonstration
 against all that this author, or any man else, can
 say for human authority in matters of religion and
 conscience. 'Tis evident, from the nature of the
 thing,

thing, that *human authority* can only take cognizance of outward actions, without regarding the inward principles and motives from which they flow; but this is not *religion*, but *civil behaviour* only. Human authority or coercion, indeed, may destroy all religion and conscience, by forcing men to the outward profession of, and compliance with, what they do not, or cannot believe and approve; and thus it may keep men of honour, and conscience out of a *church*, but can never secure any religion, honour, or conscience in it. And this is so very obvious, that it might seem strange how any man should argue otherwise, if one did not consider the prevalence of ambition and avarice in human nature, and how subject the clergy, in all ages, have been to these vices.

The *Parallel* having thus manfully acquitted the *Codex*, he proceeds to argue against any such general or unlimited toleration, in matters of religion and conscience, as some people might think reasonable, and particularly the author of the *Letter from the Temple*: and this is a matter of such consequence, that I shall not think it time ill bestowed to consider distinctly what he has offered, and lay open the fallacy of his reasonings.

But the author, before he could come to the main argument concerning toleration and liberty
of

of conscience, thought it necessary to fix and ascertain his idea of the *constitution*, and of the *church of England* as a constituent part of the *constitution*. And herein he was certainly right, and no body can blame him for it; but then, I hope, he will not advance any notion of the *constitution*, or of the *church* as a part of it, that may be obviously and evidently inconsistent with the principles of the *reformation* and *revolution*, upon which the *present church of England* subsist. The church, as this author has fairly proved, has always been, still is, and for ever must be a part of the constitution, *i. e.* the clergy must be always subject to the *civil jurisdiction*, and to the constitutional power of *parliament*; and would any man imagine that he could possibly have any contest with such an author as this? He has granted enough, and all that can be desired or wished for; but then let him take care that he does not resume or recall it again.

From p. 27 — 47, the author recites several laws that have been made since the reformation, to curb and restrain the *power of the clergy*, *i. e.* to strengthen and confirm the *protestant interest*, and to keep out *popery*; for 'tis evident to me, that the *independent temporal power of the hierarchy* is *popery*, as to the being and essence of it, whether this power should be exercised under a *civil or ecclesiastical sovereign*; and that should the king or parliament give the *clergy* the same power,

power, they would make the same spiritual use of it, as they did under the *pope*. Our parliaments, since the reformation, have been convinced of this; and have therefore found it necessary from time to time, to curtail the power of the church or clergy, and to destroy their spiritual jurisdiction over *conscience*, as the only means of maintaining and securing the *civil authority*, and the *protestant religion*. The act 1 *Eliz.* c. 1. § 17. quoted by the author, divests the clergy of an independent or distinct jurisdiction spiritual, and places it in the crown: The repeal of the act *de hereticis comburendis*, and the dissolution of the high-commission court, stripped them of all judicial power in matters of heresy and false doctrine; and the act of toleration at the *revolution*, left them no power to judge of schism, and exempted every Englishman from any *legal obligation* of submitting to any order or discipline in the *church of England*.

These laws, how much soever they have reduced the power of the church, the author seems to approve of; and therefore I am obliged, in charity, to think he is sincere: But then I am at a great loss to find out what he should here mean by the *constitution*; and after all his pains to explain it, I am as much to seek, as if he had not explained it at all. 'Tis certain, that, by the *constitution*, he cannot mean the government of this kingdom by king, lords, and commons, and the

right of this supreme parliamentary power to abrogate and repeal any old law, either in church or state, and make new ones, as they may think fit for the good of the whole society; this, which I should call the *constitution*, cannot possibly be the meaning of this learned author; he must give me leave, therefore, to guess at his meaning, which I take to be this; that the *constitution* is, the laws now in being in favour of the church or clergy, with regard to their *civil power*; any laws which may be made for the future, to increase, confirm, and strengthen this *church power*, will be strengthening, supporting, and restoring the *constitution*; but all laws to the contrary effect, *i. e.* for the farther reducing the power of the clergy, and for encouragement of liberty in matters of religion and conscience, will be so far weakning, enervating, and destroying the *constitution*. If the parliament, therefore, should think fit to go back a little towards *popery*, by strengthening, or not diminishing, the power of the clergy, they will be so far friends to the *constitution*: But should they give all protestants the same encouragements as to state-privileges, and make no distinction between Englishmen, but what arises from their loyalty to a protestant prince, and steady adherence to the government, they are then to understand, that they are sapping the foundations of the *church*, and destroying the *constitution*: Yet
such

such is the distress of his cause, that he dare not affirm or intimate the contrary, but upon this absurd and illegal supposition, that the *laws in being* ought never to be altered, because they are the *laws in being*.

But may one have leave to ask, whether this church constitution be the same now, that it was before the *reformation* and the *revolution*? The national constitution is undoubtedly the same: But what is this *church constitution*? Why the author of the *Parallel* will tell us, that the church, as a part of the state, has been always the same; and that the *constitution* was the same in the *Saxon* times that it is now. But, if the constitution of church and state be essentially the same, why should one be in more fear than the other? I presume the parliament can be under no apprehensions of losing their power; and I hope they will never think that retaining their constitutional authority, and doing justice is at all inconsistent with the good of the church. If the constitution of the church, as inseparably connected with the state, be the same now that it was in the *Saxon* times, and before the *reformation*, I cannot see how the church can be under any reasonable apprehensions, as long as we are governed by a free parliament: For while the parliament itself is safe, a parliamentary church can never be in danger; and I believe this au-

thor will not pretend, that the church of England is any other than a parliamentary church.

But I shall leave this author to explain his *church constitution* as he thinks fit; and shall only here enquire farther, how well he has acquitted himself in the business of toleration, or liberty of conscience in matters of religion.

But here one may see, that he has undertaken a very uneasy task; and methinks I could pity him, tho' he does not deserve it.

But after many round about stories, and quotations of statutes, which being mere human authority, and not infallible, can signify nothing in matters of religion, he comes at length, *p. 47.* to lay in his home charge against Dr. Rundle, and all the friends of toleration and liberty of conscience.

The author of the *Letter* had given Dr. Rundle this general character, "one who is
 "studious to promote an *unlimited toleration*;
 "that he claims a right to judge for *himself* in
 "matters of *religion*, and is willing to allow every man the same right; that he wishes, that
 "all *religious controversies* were left to the *free*
 "impartial decision of *reason* and *scripture*, without annexing any temporal *punishments*, inconveniences, or discouragements to either
 "side of the question; and that he is likely, in
 "this way, to promote any attempts for the service of *true religion*, and to discourage what
 "may

“may abridge it.” Now whether such an account of a man’s principles and temper, *can agree with the character of a friend to the constitution either in church or state—or whether it is not overthrowing all the laws which have been made for the security of the protestant succession, and the church of England*, the author is willing to leave to every serious dispassionate man to consider. How serious and dispassionate this author may think me, I shall not presume to say; but I can assure him, that I am willing to take his appeal, and to abide by the same judgment: And this, I think, he must own to be putting the matter in debate, upon a fair issue.

“He is studious to promote an unlimited toleration.” *What! are the popish priests and jesuits to be let in among us, to the perverting of the people, and overturning the constitution, without any temporal penalties! But suppose we should have popish priests and jesuits enough among us already, and can be in no great danger of more, how can he either discover or prevent this, by his temporal penalties? Or what should hinder a popish priest or jesuit from professing the religion of the church of England, and taking all the advantages of it, if he thought it for his interest? Has this spiritual chymist got any specific against knavery and hypocrisy? Or is he afraid of too many competitors? If he has found out this secret, let him discover it for the good of the*

I 2

church;

church; or otherwise his empyrical skill may chance to be called in question. 'Tis plain that he has no such method, either of prevention or cure: His art is of another kind. And this would be a sufficient answer to all his quotations out of statutes, and pleas from law, if I should say nothing more to him.

But to proceed. "He is for *toleration* (it seems) in matters of *religion and conscience*; but not for an *unlimited toleration* in such *matters*." But who shall judge in this case? And where would he fix his boundaries of limitation? If he would make himself the final decisive judge for all the world, what matters of religion and conscience shall be tolerated, and what not, this authority shall be granted him, as soon as he has produced his commission. Perhaps he would say, that he is ready to be judged by law; that the law is the proper rule of judgment in this case. But was not the law as much a rule of judgment before the reformation, as since? Or is it not so at all times, and in all countries alike? If this be his *religion*, the *constitution* of his conscience, let him plainly tell us so, and stand to it. Why should honesty boggle, or truth and reason be ashamed of the light? If he could make it appear that a human jurisdiction, in matters of religion and conscience, is possible or practical, it might be worth his while to do it. But he is able to prove
nothing

nothing at all of this; and yet he proceeds all along upon such an absurd and most senseless supposition, tho' it is certainly the very essence of popery, and the great foundation of the anti-christian kingdom; for this temporal jurisdiction over conscience, is the same thing in itself, and must ever have, as it always had hitherto, the same effects, whether it be exercised under the pope, general councils, national synods, or temporal princes.

He affects, every where, to confound *religion* and *conscience* with *temporal interest* and *civil property*; as if one might be the matter of human laws, or of temporal cognizance and jurisdiction, as well as the other. But is it possible that any man living should be sincere in this? Or that all the artifice in the world should hide the deceit? Can this gentleman, or any of his hierarchical friends, imagine, that they are serving the cause of *God* and *religion*, while they are pleading only for temporal wealth and dominion, under the thin transparent disguise of hereby promoting and securing the *church*, or kingdom of *Christ*? 'Tis certain, that the temporal wealth and power of the clergy have ever proved the bane of religion, and the plague of the christian world: I say, their *temporal spiritualized power*; for whether this be exercised under popes, councils, or princes, it is still the very same thing.

This author seems to start and recoil, at every turn, at a *toleration for popery*; tho' if I do not very much mistake him, he is for the *establishing* of it: I mean the same *church power*, tho' under another *head*. He could not directly condemn the right and power of parliament, as exercised at the reformation and revolution; and therefore would fain be thought contented with the power the church has now: He could not say, that the constitution was destroyed by all, or any of the laws, which have been hitherto made to restrain the power of the clergy; but yet would have his reader believe, that if this power of the church, or clergy, or even the grossest abuses of it, should be farther limited or restrained by any subsequent act or acts of parliament, the *constitution* must be endangered, if not lost; and a gap might be opened for the inlet of popery. Now I should be glad to know what harm there is in popery, as inimical to civil society, but *church power*, and a temporal jurisdiction over *conscience*? 'Tis not surely the belief of *transubstantiation*, or any other speculative error, that makes popery so dangerous to this nation, and not fit to be tolerated; a man who should believe this, no more hurts his neighbour, or breaks the peace of society, than if he should believe the sun to be no broader than a cart-wheel, or that the moon was made of a green cheese: A man who believes this, ought rather to be pitied than persecuted; and

and a madhouse would be fitter for him than a goal: But whoever would pretend to alter such a man's opinion, by force and temporal penalties, would be still a greater madman himself. And yet, perhaps, it might not be difficult to prove that some protestants maintain as great absurdities as this, and endeavour to force men into the belief of them; in which they act the part of papists, and might as well take the name.

But neither are the principles of persecution peculiar to the papists; for I take this author's book, which I am now considering, to be an evident demonstration of the contrary. But the danger of popery to this nation, lies chiefly in their denying, as a principle of conscience, the king's supremacy in the church; the consequence of which is, that they are subjected to another sovereign, and have sworn allegiance to a foreign jurisdiction: Which yet is no more than what almost the whole body of the *jacobite* clergy did at the revolution; who, notwithstanding this, took the oaths, and kept their places, without ever changing their principles. But were not the non-jurors, at that time, much honest men, and more to be trusted? Or would the papists stick at the oath of supremacy, if they had not some conscience? but 'tis certain that the law can have nothing to do with conscience, which is above all human cognizance and jurisdiction.

dition. Men cannot expect or claim the protection of the laws, here, or in any other country, if they will not give the necessary security for their civil peaceable behaviour under the government. And 'tis this avowed treasonable and anti-state principle, which makes papists dangerous here, and not any speculative errors in matters of mere religion and conscience. The papists, I presume, in matters of religion cannot be thought more mistaken than the Jews, who deny and reject Christ as an impostor and false prophet; and yet their public worship is tolerated. In short, the papists among us are not denied the benefit and liberty of their public worship, on account of any of their errors and false doctrines in religion, nor even for their damning, schismaticating, and hereticating protestants, which is no more than protestants have always done by one another; but as they are known and professed enemies to the *state* or *civil government*: And this is the only good reason that can be assigned, for keeping them out of places of power and profit. But should a papist's *interest* prevail against his *conscience*, why might he not take the oath of supremacy, and profess the religion of the church of England? How could our hierarchy, with all their temporal penalties, prevent it? Or how can they purge themselves from deists, atheists, heretics, schismatics, and infidels? The design of all this cant, as commonly used and applied to
the

the good purpose of exterminating *error*, and securing *true religion* by *force*, is so very evident, and the gloss so perfectly transparent, that as men can never talk of it without laughing in their sleeves, so I wonder how they should help laughing out: But such is the power of a natural or an habitually affected gravity, that a man by use may seem to be serious, while he is cutting another man's *throat*, or persuading him to cut his *own*. But to spoil this damned and damnable trade, I would here let the over-scrupulous and conscientious man into a secret, which is this: That all *human creeds*, in matters of *divine faith*, all state-subscriptions to *orthodoxy* and *true religion*, are nothing but ecclesiastical tricks and a spiritual *hocus-pocus* to get money. You ought to consider yourselves, therefore, with these men, as in a *state of war*, and as having no more right to your *faith* than to your *property*.

One man comes up to you with a *pistol* pointed at your breast, and demands your *money*; another with a *creed*, to demand your *faith*, by which he means nothing but *money*: As these are equally robbers, you ought to treat them both alike, and to stand upon honour and conscience just as much with the one, as you would with the other. The man who robs you of money upon the high road, and demands all you have about you, may afterwards beat and abuse you for misinforming him, and cheating him out of part

of your *own right*: But the faith-robber can never treat you thus; give all that he demands, and let him prove that you have reserved any; or let him prove, if he can, that you are not as honest a man, and as true a believer, as he. These ecclesiastical robbers always think that other men have some conscience, when they have none themselves; whereas no man can be obliged, upon any principle of justice or morality, to treat them otherwise than as common enemies in a *state of war*, i. e. to treat them as they *really are*.

This doctrine may, perhaps, seem new and strange, but yet I dare stand to it; and shall venture, as occasion may be offered, to justify it against the old trade of *creed-making*. And I doubt not but to prove, that they who act upon this principle, are much *honest* men than they who reduce them to it, and lay them under the necessity of it.

If *conscience* ought to be sacred, why should *interest* be opposed to it? What friends can they be to religion and conscience, who would make it men's interest to be hypocrites and rogues? Or, if self-defence must be always lawful, and a man cannot be bound to sacrifice his life or property to the right of truth with another in a state of war with him, what right or claim can a spiritual robber have more than a temporal one?

'Tis

'Tis well known, that the articles of the church of England were drawn up by the synod of Dort, with a design to suppress *Arminianism*, as the heresy of that time; and which was then thought the same thing, or at least inseparably connected with *Papery*: And these Calvinistical articles must be still deemed as the sense of the church of England, since the church has never yet declared any other sense.

Now this being plainly so, some might perhaps make it a question, how far the English clergy, at this time, have kept to the original fundamental doctrines of the church; and whether the synod of Dort, and all our first reformers, if now sitting, must not anathematize and excommunicate them, as departed from the true protestant doctrines, and thereby breaking and dividing the unity of the Church?

Should there be any ground for such a charge, some men had need look about them, and particularly the author of this very *Letter*; who seems to think that Doctor Clarke and Doctor Rundle might be justly suspected of some infidelity, with regard to the settled established doctrines of the church.

But one must not here enquire, with what grace these men could talk at this rate; since they have doubtless their reasons for it, and such as, upon occasion, they will be able to support. However, I must not leave the author of the

Parallel here; because there are some other accounts, still unadjusted, to be made up with him.

But thus much, I think, has been settled between us already; That he would tolerate no opinions but what he likes; that he likes nothing but what is for his own *interest*; and that he would have the laws *in-being* stand for the *constitution*, unless they can be altered for the *good* of the CHURCH, or so as to increase and strengthen the *power of the clergy*. And thus far we understand him right; tho' some may make it a question, whether he intended to be understood or not.

But the author, p. 43. allows, "That man, as
 " a free agent, has a natural right or power to
 " judge for himself in all matters, either religious
 " or civil; but with this restriction, that if he
 " misapplies his reason, judges wrong, and acts
 " accordingly, he may be subject to such inconveniences and punishments as the laws of God
 " and man have ordained." And here he puts the *parallel* between all *religious* and *civil* matters, as if they depended both upon the same reasons and principles. But could he find out no distinction in nature between *right* and *power*? Or was he under any necessity here of publishing himself a *Hobbist*? Suppose the civil power has a right to punish all opinions that disturb the state, and such as are inconsistent with the good of the public,

lic, or with the natural rights and liberties of mankind in society; will it from hence follow, that all opinions are of this nature, which this author might think fit to call religious, or which he might imagine his own *interest* to be concerned in? Or is there no difference between religion and civil policy? 'Tis plain that he can either find out no such distinction, or does not care to own it; and must therefore be very dull, or something worse: For,

“ Thus, in the civil state of things, and in
 “ matters temporal, a man may possibly be of
 “ opinion, that all things are by nature common,
 “ and ought to continue so; and there have not
 “ been wanting those who have entertained such
 “ notions: But where *property* is settled by the
 “ laws of the land, if he should invade that of
 “ another, the law may call it felony, and he be
 “ hanged for a thief.” But how perfectly absurd
 and senseless is this comparison! If this man's
 opinions in religion, are his *property*, he ought to
 be secured and defended in the full and free possession
 of them, even by law, where it is necessary; as it is
 the business of the law to guard and secure every man's
 property: But must I be forced to espouse an opinion,
 because it is his *property*? Or is it not enough that
 he is left in the full and free possession of it himself?
 Is his interest to govern and direct my opinions,
 or to determine my understanding, judgment, and
 conscience? But I maintain

maintain opinions which are inconsistent with his property; why then I am to be punished for maintaining any such opinions, this being necessary to guard his *property*. But does he not here see, that it can be only the outward *profession* of any such opinions that can be punished, and not the opinions themselves which the law cannot possibly alter? The design of the law, it seems, is to make us wise and honest, just and good; and so to secure *true religion*: But why may I not yield all possible obedience to law, and yet be of no religion at all? A man professes to believe *transubstantiation*; this profession is inconsistent with his being a dignitary in the *church*: Let him therefore suppress this belief, or pretend to believe the contrary, and then he is as good a church of England man, and as legally established, as this author himself. But he that would say this, would be wicked and abominable: It may be so. But then who is it that tempts men to this wickedness, and lays them under the strongest worldly motives to disguise their *religion* for *interest*, and to profess what they do not, or cannot, believe? And here this writer will doubtless *wash his hands in innocency*, whoever else may be guilty.

What, therefore, this author calls *encouraging religion, securing an uniformity of worship, &c.* is encouraging men only to profess *one* and the *same* religion, and unite in a common outward form, without

without being of any religion at all: For how can *true religion* be encouraged or promoted by such a prostitution of *conscience*?

The author of the *Letter from the Temple* had said, "If the constitution of the church of England is such that whoever maintains liberty, private judgment, the supreme authority of scripture and reason, and a right in all to a toleration, by that becomes an enemy to it; that such a constitution ought not to be preserved." One would take the consequence here to be very plain and necessary, that if, by any laws now in being, the *constitution* of the church is such, that a man must be an enemy to this *constitution*, who should maintain *liberty, private judgment, the supreme authority of scripture and reason*, and a right in these matters to a *toleration*; that then, upon this supposition, such laws ought to be altered, and the *constitution* mended.

This is so plain, so natural and necessary an inference, that this author, tho' he could not deny it; yet cannot affirm the contrary, but upon the supposition mentioned before, that the *laws in being* are infallible, and not to be altered.

But did the parliament ever pretend to set up for infallibility? or to make a set of laws that ought never to be altered? Did they ever cut themselves off from the right of correcting or restraining any abuses which might possibly arise from the

the exercise of power? The author throws himself into such convulsions upon this, that I shall spare him the confusion of being laughed at, so much as he ought to be.

But this *daring author*, who would not have any body *dare* to write against him, yet *dares* to represent the bishops themselves as under a state of *persecution*, by the act of *Præmunire*, and the king's letter missive. I shall here quote the author's own words; and then, with a few observations, leave the reader to judge of their only true and natural construction.

Page 52, 53. " The admitting into holy orders, the ordaining of priests and deacons, is
 " a religious matter; conscience is therein greatly concerned, and they must lay hands suddenly on no man. Though the author of the
 " *Letter* contends, that in all religious matters they ought to judge for themselves, without
 " being subject to penalties or inconveniences;
 " yet if, upon the *crown's nomination*, almost
 " the whole bench of bishops (for the case necessarily implies, that there are not a sufficient
 " number left to do it) should decline to consecrate the person appointed, and humbly remonstrate to his majesty, that they could not
 " in conscience act therein, what is then to be
 " done! They are to be called a cabal of bishops,
 " and one of the most severe laws is to be put
 " in the most severe manner in execution against
 " them,

“ them, and they are to be subjected to a Præmunire, by 25 *Hen. VIII.* That is, they shall
 “ be put out of the king’s protection, shall forfeit
 “ their lands, goods and chattles, and be imprisoned during the king’s pleasure; *and if that*
 “ *be not sufficient, it is left to the consideration of*
 “ *abler persons, to think of a proper cure for so*
 “ *dangerous a distemper.* What can there be more
 “ severe, unless it be *fire and faggot?*

The author of the *Letter*, therefore, could have little reason to complain of the want of *toleration* out of the church, while the church itself is left under so *grievous a persecution* as this.

If this be not a matter of conscience and religion, there can be no such thing as *conscience* or *religion*; and therefore let God and the world judge between men under this *Parallel*. But surely this *Parallel* advocate here forgot himself a little, or otherwise he would never have represented it as a *persecuting power* still legally retained in the *crown*, to maintain its supremacy over the spiritual part of the *legislature*; especially after he had fixed his idea of the *constitution* to the *laws in being*. But does not this *Law-in-being man*, here set himself up as a *constitution mender*? Can he think these *laws in being* to be right? Or that the *church* ought not to have more *power*, as well as other people more *grace*?

But ’tis very plain, that the præmunire and letter missive, at the reformation, were thought
 absolutely

absolutely necessary to secure the *king's supremacy*, and to prevent the nation's relapsing into so *dangerous a distemper*, as a *church-independency*; and whether the constitutional power of parliament, the legal right of the crown, and the liberty of the subject, do not still depend on the force of these laws, I may leave any indifferent person to judge.

One cannot suppress all indignation upon the mock distinction which here seems to be made between *civil* matters, and matters of *religion* and *conscience*. It is not a matter of religion or conscience, whether bishops shall be peers and sit in the house of lords, or not: This is a legal privilege and honour against which I have no complaint. If any man should think this honour, upon the terms he receives it, inconsistent with any principles of religion and conscience, he cannot be forced to it, and may easily decline it, without any injury done him; but the power of the crown over the spirituality in parliament, and their entire subjection to the civil jurisdiction, is a matter of infinite consequence to this nation, with regard to their *civil interests*, and has been always found so, by our *parliaments*: This was the fundamental principle of the *reformation*, which could never have been brought about at first, or since secured, by any *church power*. Men may cant about these matters as long as they will; but 'tis very evident, and the thing speaks itself, that our
reformation

reformation from popery took place upon the restraining *church power*; and that we always have hitherto, and ever must go back again, in proportion to the *strength* and *increase* of it. 'Tis evident from the complaints and outcries of the high-flying clergy all along, that they have looked upon themselves as under a state of persecution, since their power has been thus restrained: And though they can have no hopes of a restoration under the *pope*, yet they seem not to have given up all expectations of it under the *crown*. But thanks be to heaven! we are not now in the least danger of this: And though men may call what they please, *religion*, yet they cannot put out our eyes; in spite of *art*, *religion* and *interest* will be two things.

From this 53d page, to the end of the book, the author throws himself into very odd and strange paroxysms of fear, dread, and apprehensions of danger: One would think he had discovered some deep and formidable design of subverting the whole constitution, order, doctrine, and discipline of the church; of depriving the established clergy of all their glebe-lands, tithes, dues, and revenues, as now settled by law; and of setting up presbytery, popery, deism, or something else in the room of the present church of England. But from whence these glooms and dismal apprehensions should proceed, if this gentleman

gentleman be not a little disordered in his senses, I cannot imagine.

I believe he would not have been so much frightened, or brought so near to his wits end, had a project been laid to convert all the livings and ecclesiastical preferments in England, into *sinecures*, and to exempt the incumbents from all rites, ceremonies, services, and duties whatever; provided the profits had been well secured, and the number of competitors not increased: For, notwithstanding his seeming panic, I can hardly conceive that he would rejoice at the conversion of all dissenters and papists, and at their coming all at once into the church of England. Men of his constitution and temper have always endeavoured to make the barriers to church-power and preferment, as narrow and as strong as could be, in order to keep the places in as few hands as possible, and prevent too much competition.

Were the protestant dissenters, especially, under the same latitude and *constitution* of conscience with this gentleman, they might possibly stand his competitors for all his farther views of wealth and power in the church, as they may certainly contend with him for their religion and loyalty, for their firm attachment to the protestant interest, and to the present royal family; and consequently, for all the honours and encouragements that can be due to the best of subjects: None of them

them have ever yet been hanged, or otherwise punished for treason and rebellion under a protestant reign, or betrayed any inclination of giving up the kingdom to a *popish pretender*.

But what, in the name of wonder! has this author been so much frightened at? 'Tis pity, methinks, he would not come out of his fits, and tell us the ground of his fears. Is he afraid that the parliament may, some time or other, restrain any abuses of *church power*, or apply any proper remedy to the corruptions in the *ecclesiastical courts*? Or does he dread, that the present grounds and occasions of prostituting and prophaning the most holy sacrament of *Christ's* body and blood, may be some time or other removed; and the ministers of *Christ* may be left at liberty to execute his laws, according to their own judgments and consciences? This, one would think, is what every minister of the gospel, in all christian churches, should petition for. Something, I fear, of this, lies at the bottom; though the author thought it more to his purpose to seem under the convulsions and pangs of conscience, that he might hereby raise the greater outcry, and move the more compassion: *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*

And thus, Sir, I have gone through this *Letter*, and made such observations upon it, as most naturally occurred to my thoughts in reading it: How far I have entered into the spirit of the author, or laid open the true design and intention
of

of the book, you and the public must be now left to judge. I can truly say, that I have not wilfully mistaken or misrepresented him; and if I have done it without design, I shall be ready to receive farther information, and submit to any reasonable correction. If the author writ with a fair design of maintaining true religion, no doubt but he will be able to support his principles, and his method of proving them: But if he writ with artifice, and design for worldly wealth and dominion, without much regard to true religion, this will appear still clearer, the more he shall endeavour to disguise it.

I shall only add, that all this author's encomiums upon the *reformation* and *revolution*, so far as I can see, are nothing else but complying with the *necessity of the times*: For I think that his notions of church power, and his principles of *toleration* and *liberty of conscience*, must otherwise have led him to condemn *both*. Might he not have argued as strenuously and consistently for the laws in being before the reformation and revolution as he does now under the pretence of standing up for the *constitution*? Or how comes it about that the constitution both in church and state was not the same then as now? 'Tis more than possible, that I may be censured and condemned by this author and his hierarchical friends, as a *pestilent fellow*, and a *mover of sedition*, for talking thus freely: But I shall not be much moved or

or concerned at this, since it was once the charge laid against a much greater man than I, or any now living, by an *eloquent orator*. If the author can defend his principles, he will need no other assistance but reason ; and if he cannot, nothing else can help him.

I am, SIR,

Your humble Servant, &c.

March 11,
1734-5.

The End of the LETTER.



A
BRIEF VIEW
OF
Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction,
As it is at
This Day practised in *England*.

Addressed to
Sir NATHANIEL CURZON, *Bart.*

A N D
The rest of the Gentlemen of the Committee
appointed by Parliament, for enquiring into
the Abuses and Corruptions of ECCLESIAS-
TICAL COURTS and *Jurisdictions*.

First printed in the Year 1733.

VOL. III.

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By NATHANIEL CURSON, Barr.

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FOR



T O

Sir NATHANIEL CURZON, *Bart.*

A N D

The rest of the gentlemen of the committee appointed by parliament, for enquiring into the abuses and corruptions of ecclesiastical courts and jurisdictions.

GENTLEMEN,

AS the *grand inquest* of the kingdom of Great Britain have devolved upon you the *trust* of enquiring into the abuses and corruptions of *ecclesiastical courts and jurisdictions*, give me leave briefly, and in *miniature*, to represent to your view, a contracted *scheme* of those courts and *jurisdictions* in England; whereby it will appear what an incredible sum is yearly drained and squeezed out of the people's *purses*

and *estates* by such ecclesiastical *officers* and spiritual *persons*, who make *gain* their only *godliness*.

But as my intent here is not to intermeddle with their *doctrines* of *faith*, or practices in *religion*, I shall only at present enquire, whether a great cause of the impoverishing of this nation, is not occasioned by an *over-numerous body* of *ecclesiastics* among us, and by the exactions, extortions and oppressions of what are called *spiritual courts* and *jurisdictions*.

In order to this *enquiry*, I beg leave to recite a *maxim* or observation of the lord *Verulam*, (which will be found to contain an eternal truth) *viz.* *That a smaller number who spend more and earn less, do sooner wear out an estate, than a greater number that live lower (meaner) and gather more; so it is (says he) with an overgrown (i. e. a numerous and luxuriant) clergy.* For they consume the labours of *others* but bring in nothing to the *stock*.

And that the *stock* and produce of the *English nation*, is in a great measure swallowed up and devoured by the numerous body of our *ecclesiastics*, and their *jurisdictions*, *courts*, and *officers*, will I believe evidently appear, if you consider the following observables, respecting those persons, and their courts and jurisdictions.

I. We have here in England two provincial archbishops, Canterbury and York; each of which has his princely retinue for the support
of

of his temporal grandeur, as well as a numerous body of spiritual officers, for the exercise and execution of his ecclesiastical jurisdiction and authority.

In the number of their temporal retinue, we may reckon their stewards and bailiffs of Lordships, manors, lands, &c. stewards of their households, gentlemen-ushers, ushers of their halls, comptrollers, yeomen of their horse, secretaries, housekeepers, purveyors, butlers, cooks, &c.

And among the latter their suffragans, vicars-general, guardians of spiritualties, chancellors, officials, commissaries, deans, archdeacons, registers, deputy-registers, advocates, apparitors, proctors, *cum multis aliis*.

And as the officers and attendants of these archbishops are of two kinds, so are their courts, viz.

1. *Courts temporal*, as courts leet, courts baron, customary courts, courts of franchises and privileges, courts of piepowder, (for some of them keep fairs and markets) and other like courts.

2. *Courts spiritual*, as the court of arches (to Canterbury) prerogative courts, courts of delegates, consistory courts, or courts of audience, courts of faculties for granting licences and dispensations (with divers others.)

II. Next, as to bishops (who in most things imitate archbishops) we may observe,

1. That within England we have twenty-four diocesan bishops.

2. That these have also their several trains of domestic officers, servants, and attendants, both temporal and spiritual.

But as I shall not at present enter into a disquisition of their estates in lordships, manors, lands, palaces, gardens, &c. so I shall here wave all enquiry into the state of their *temporal revenues*; my present intention being chiefly to remark on their ecclesiastical or spiritual courts and jurisdictions. Wherein I observe, that our twenty-four bishops have, to assist them in the exercise and execution of their spiritual jurisdiction, the following officers, *viz.*

24 Suffragans, if not double the number, with their attendants.

26 Chancellors, with their attendants.

26 Registers with their attendants.

26 Deputy-registers, with their clerks, &c.

26 Gentlemen apparitors.

52, or more proctors; and

150, or more, common apparitors.

With many other officers, notaries, clerks, and attendants.

Note, Bath and Wells, as well as Litchfield and Coventry, have their distinct courts, i. e. one in each division of those dioceses.

There are also under these archbishops and bishops, at least,

60 Arch-

60 Archdeaconries. And to these belong,
60 Archdeacons courts; which consist of
60 commissaries or judges of those courts; as
also

60 or more surrogates, or deputy commissaries.

60 Registers, with their deputies, scribes, and
clerks.

120 proctors, (*i. e.* if we allow but two to
each court.)

200 or more apparitors, with a multitude of
promoters and informers; *cum aliis officiariis.*

*See of the exercise of their jurisdiction here-
after.*

But further, besides the before-mentioned of-
ficers we may observe another, who, in their ec-
clesiastical oeconomy, is called a *dean*, in Latin *de-
canus*. For that 'tis said, in his first institution,
he was to preside over ten parishes, which was
therefore called a deanery.

But *deans* are now with us distinguished into
four or five kinds, *viz.*

1. *Cathedral deans*; these, with their respective
chapters, have in many things a concurrent juris-
diction with the bishop of the diocese: And some
authorities they have which are independent of
him. The number of this kind of deans in Eng-
land and Wales is twenty-four. For at St. Da-
vid's and Landaff they have no cathedral deans,
the office of dean being there exercised by the
bishops themselves.

2. *Collegiate deans*, some whereof have all the concomitants and attendants of a *cathedral dean*, except that of having a bishop at their head; such a dean is that of Westminster college, &c.

3. *Exempt deans*, i. e. such as are exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, as having an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction, within their own particular precincts; such a dean is that of *Battle* in *Sussex*, who is, or may be, invested in his deanry by the king's letters patent, and needs no institution or induction by the bishop or archdeacon, *Quære*, of the dean or provost of *Eaton* college, if an exempt, &c.

4. *Non-exempt deans*, i. e. such as are not so exempt as aforesaid. These are generally donatives in the archbishops, and consequently have a peculiar jurisdiction derived from them; such are the deans of the arches (and *St. Martin le Grand*) in *London*; the dean of *Bocking* in *Essex*, with some others under the archbishop of *Canterbury*, and I have heard of the like under the archbishop of *York*, but can at present give no certain account of them.

5. *Rural deans*; these originally had no judicial power, being only substituted by the bishop to assist him in granting administrations and probats of wills. But I am informed, that at this day divers of those deans have arrogated to themselves a *species of jurisdiction*. Though 'tis said, their chief business is only to feast the clergy at visitations,

visitations, for which they have a licence to raise contributions within their deanries.—— See *Nelson's Rights of the Clergy*, 252, 253, &c.

And seeing we have mentioned cathedral deans, I shall here beg leave to give a *specimen* of the several parts or members whereof the cathedratic choir or body is usually composed; which, taking our pattern from that at St. Paul's, stands thus:

I *Bishop*, I *dean*, I *subdean*, I *præcentor*, I *chancellor*, who has under him divers scribes, clerks and officers; I, *treasurer*, who has an officer called a *sacrist* or *sacristan* for a coadjutor, and this *sacrist* has 3 or 4 attendants called *vi-ergers*. There are also 5 archdeacons, 30 prebendaries, 12 petty canons, 6 or 8 vicars choral, and about 24 choristers and singing-boys, besides other officers and attendants: The whole number of officers and attendants in this and other cathedrals amounting to about 150, and in some, as I am informed, to near 200.

And if any person is desirous to know the several procurations, synodals, pensions, payments and perquisites appropriated to each of the above-mentioned officers within the diocese of London; let him peruse Mr. Newcourt's *Repertorium Canonicum*, Vol. I. fol. 58, 102, &c. And by an account taken from the second volume of that book, I find that, in the single county of Essex, there is yearly paid to the bishop and archdea-

cons, in procurations, pensions, and synodals only, about 500*l.* *per Annum.*

And upon the whole account, which may easily be deduced from the foregoing *view* and *specimen*, I think it will evidently appear, that the *number* of spiritual officers and attendants belonging to archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, and cathedral deans only, will amount to more than 20,000 persons, besides preaching ministers. And that these receive for their maintenance one with another, at least forty pounds a man yearly, which will amount to at least *eight hundred thousand pounds per Annum.* A surprising sum! And when we consider that many of those officers instead of forty pounds *per Annum*, do make two, three, or four hundred pounds *per Annum*, by their ecclesiastical employments, I conceive the above computation may well be extended to ten hundred thousand pounds *per Annum*: All which is extorted and squeezed out of the people's purses, merely to support ecclesiastical power and jurisdiction.

We may here further observe, that, besides the spiritual jurisdiction abovementioned, some of our bishops (as Durham, Ely, &c.) have a palatine jurisdiction annexed to their bishoprics, which includes in itself a double species of sovereign power, (*i. e.* temporal and spiritual) within the limits of their respective jurisdictions. And accordingly, in pursuance, and for the more effectual

tual execution of this *partie per pale* sovereign power, they have their supreme courts both temporal and spiritual from whence no appeal lies, but to the bishop himself. He (the bishop) being there (in Durham) said to be supreme lord and head, both in spirituals and temporals; inso-much as the practisers in those courts are said to have a maxim, *Quod brevia domini regis non currunt in provincia Dunelmensi, quia episcopus ibidem facit vicecomitem*. It being well known that the bishop there by virtue of his own letters patent and grants, doth constitute all judges, sheriffs, officers, &c. who, by virtue of such grants, do (exclusive of the king and his royal prerogative) judge and determine of the lives, liberties, and properties of such of the kings subjects as happen to live or reside within the limits of that jurisdiction.

'Tis also under pretence of this *double bodied* jurisdiction, that, in the diocese of Durham, they usually extort vast sums of money yearly, from such as they there call the *bishop's subjects*: and by a peculiar artifice (which will always be practised where both the temporal and spiritual authority concur in the same person) the practisers in both those courts (*i. e.* the proctors and attorneys) do so play the game into each other's hands, that the poor client is often forced to bear the rapines and plunderings of both *jurisdiction*. For let the nature of the cause be either spiri-

tual or temporal, the temporal as well as the spiritual courts are frequently employed to support the judgments of either. An *outlawry* there being the natural consequence of an excommunication, as an excommunication generally follows that of an outlawry; and by this method is the *summum jus* of ecclesiastical jurisdiction there perfected.

Besides which, (if I am rightly informed) this principality of Durham claims a privilege or prerogative of not being bound by acts of parliament, except expressly named therein: And that under this pretext, they say they are not bound by the late act for *regulating, registering, and enrolling attorneys*, &c. Whether this be so or not, will deserve your enquiry. But this I know, that in the printed lists of sworn attorneys published by authority, although all other inferior jurisdictions, as Chester, Lancaster, the *cinque ports*, &c. sent up lists of their attorneys, and the same are accordingly printed; yet I find no account given of the attorneys practising in any of the courts at Durham. It seems they shelter themselves under the authority of the bishop, and consequently bid defiance to the act of parliament.

Nor is it any excuse for these palatine attorneys, to say, that their names are included in the general lists of attorneys of the *King's-Bench* or *Common-Pleas*. For whether that be so or not,
does

does no where appear on those lists. And we know to be an attorney of an inferior jurisdiction, is incompatible with the office of an attorney of the superior courts at Westminster. For in those inferior courts, the attorney is usually sworn, on his admission, not to plead any foreign plea, *i. e.* such a plea as deprives or denies the jurisdiction of those inferior courts. So that, in effect, all the attorneys of those courts are sworn not to permit any cause that arises within their jurisdiction, to be determined by any other judges but their own.

I may hereto add one other observation, touching the bishopric of Durham: That whatever temporal privileges or prerogatives were formerly annexed to that bishopric, were, and the very foundation of its being made a county palatine, was, by reason of the vicinity of our once enemies the Scots, which necessitated the constituting of officers like those of the old Romans, called *comites limitanei*, for repelling the incursions of enemies. But as the English and Scots are now become united brethren, there can be no tolerable reason rendered for indulging this bishopric with those intolerable privileges and prerogatives it now claims.

I have now by me a most moving and lamentable account (contained in above sixty letters) sent me by Mr. John Tempest of Old Durham, (formerly a member of your house) complaining
of

of the most barbarous and tyrannic proceedings of the spiritual and temporal courts there, against his person, estate, and property, that ever was known to have been practised in any court of law or justice whatever. And this (as he says) chiefly promoted and carried on by a confederacy between the bishop's chancellor and sheriff, who, by their under officers and agents, have illegally seized upon whatever of his property they can lay their hands on, on pretence of an outlawry or excommunication, of which he had no notice till the seizure actually made. And that, upon application to his sovereign, the bishop, for redress, he has been denied all manner of relief; and therefore intreats me to represent his case to you, the parliament's committee, which I am now preparing to that end.

But before I trouble you with that particular case, I beg leave to add a few other general observations, touching the artifices and practices of *bishops*, &c. in driving on their ecclesiastical trade of getting money, which artifices and practices, I shall endeavour to range under these ten *general heads* (exclusive of some excentricities) *viz.*

1. By their fees for ordaining priests and deacons, which general ordinations being at four times in the year, may well be computed at about 100*l*. each time. And thus the whole 26 bishops and

and archbishops, may make in the whole about 10,400*l.* per Annum.

2 By institutions and inductions to vacant benefices, for every one of which they have at least three pounds. And there being computed in England 9285 parishes, this, at the ordinary rate of one in a parish, comes to 27,855*l.*

Note, Some parishes consist of divers benefices, and others have divers chapelries, which are of the same nature, and require institution and induction as well as other benefices. The single parish of Hallifax in Yorkshire, has ten or twelve such chapelries. Nor are the institutions to archdeaconries, deanries, prebendaries, sinecures, &c. here included; so that this head of institutions and inductions is of much greater benefit to bishops, than is generally estimated.

3. For making rural deans, and for taking their oaths, &c. The bishops usually receive of every rural dean so sworn, the yearly sum of 8*s.* 6*d.* as I am informed. And this may hint to us the reason why the late queen Anne, no doubt on the advice or importunity of some bishops, sent her letter, dated 29 Jan. 1710, to the then convocation, for augmenting the number of rural deans, &c. See Nelson's *Rights of the Clergy*, p. 252.

4. By granting visitation licences to beneficed ministers to preach in their *own cures*; for although they are ordained, instituted and inducted before

before, and by the canons are strictly enjoined to preach the gospel; yet this must not be done, till such a visitation licence, or the bishop's approbation, be obtained: which licence, on every episcopal visitation, costs every such beneficed minister 10s. And this for the said 9285 parishes, or rather above 10,000 benefices in England, comes to 5000*l.* *per Annum.*

Note, when the bishop does not visit, the arch-deacon does, and that twice yearly; so that there never fails a visitation, in order to pick up the pence. *Vide post*, Archdeacons jurisdiction.

5. By granting several other special kinds of licences, whereof nine or ten are sufficiently remarkable, *viz.*

1. Licences to unbeneficed curates and deacons to preach, &c.

2. Licences to schoolmasters and schoolmistresses to teach, &c.

3. Licences to parish-clerks to sing, &c.

4. Licences to parishioners to repair, enlarge, or amend their church.

5. Licences to church-wardens and overseers in divers cases.

6. Licences to physicians to practice physic.

7. Licences to midwives to practice their profession, and to baptize.

8. Licences to notaries public to practice knavery.

9. Li-

9. Licences to marry, and commit adultery, to have two wives, &c.

And I believe, on enquiry, some other kinds of *bishop's licences* may be discovered, as perhaps *licences to communicate with the church of Rome*; for I have heard some discourses of that kind.

But to proceed,

6. The bishops also receive very considerable profits or perquisites by consecrating of churches and church-yards; for though nothing be due of right, yet 'tis well known what is voluntarily given into the hands of a bishop's servant for his master's uses, can be no simony or corruption in the bishop. This may be learned from the example of a present right reverend and ever memorable prelate.

7. By granting absolutions and commutations for penances, wherein there is generally a regard had to the ability of the sinner. For if he be rich, a good round sum is expected to free him from that chain of the devil called excommunication; but if the wretch be poor, he is delivered to the devil of course; and though he performs his penance both in body and soul, yet neither can be delivered, either from hell or the ecclesiastical court, till he has paid his fees.

8. They also receive vast sums of money by granting probates of wills, and letters of administration. And by an usurped right (for so in fact, this

this jurisdiction is) they are become in a great measure the disposers and dispensers of dead men's wills; and tho' now therein providentially restrained in some things, by the act of distributions, yet still possessed of too much power to be for the subjects benefit.

9. By framing new oaths and articles against their visitations, and compelling church-wardens to swear to present according to such new invented articles; whereby divers prosecutions of innocent persons have been carried on in the ecclesiastical courts.

'Tis true, this practice is now almost *ex usu*, but instead thereof we have almost yearly new sets of *pastoral charges*, which, how little benefit soever they bring, either to the flock or the book-seller, yet have proved gainful to some of their lordships.

10. By procurations, synodals, and other visitatorial payments and pensions: For in the bishop's visitation two things are observable:

1. The church-wardens and chapel-wardens of every parish and chapelry within the diocese, are called over, and there receive a book of articles to present by, for which they generally pay 2 s. or 2 s. 6 d. and if any of them are absent, they are there cited or summoned by proclamation, to appear in the bishop's next *consistorial court with costs*.

Note,

Note, These church-wardens and chapel-wardens do pay at every bishop's visitation for such a book of articles, tho' the very same they had before. They also pay the bishop's clerk for writing their presentments, (tho' many of them do it themselves) 2 s. 6 d. which, in 9285 parishes, comes to 1058 l. to which add for the book of articles, and it doubles the sum.

2. All the ministers within the diocese are obliged to attend the bishop's visitation, where they are to pay about 1 s. 8 d. or more, merely for producing to the bishop's register their licences to preach, though such licences have been so produced and allowed never so often before. After which, they pay to the bishop, or to his use, the usual sum for *procurations* and *synodals*; as also 8 d. claimed by the gentleman apparitor, to whom most pay 1 s. This payment seems to be in favour of the bishop's *man*, in order to obtain that of the master. There is also a suit and service expected at this court from all, even the poorest unbene-ficed curate or clerk within the diocese. But I suppose these are spared in point of money, out of charity, or ———

One thing more is observable with respect to the province of York, *viz.* that when any arch-bishop is first installed or enthroned at York, all the parsons and vicars within his jurisdiction, tho' never so poor, and their family-charge never so great, are obliged to give him the tenth of their eccle-

ecclesiastical livings, as a benevolence, in order to assist the poor archbishop to settle himself in that see; which they say usually amounts to seven or eight thousand pounds, (a sweet morsel of ecclesiastical food!) And 'tis said, that if any, even the meanest vicar, whose children want bread, does through poverty omit this customary payment, he must certainly expect to be severely whipped for the offence, in their merciless spiritual court, till they have flayed him to the very bones.

Besides which, in some dioceses, as London, &c. there is a duty paid, called the bishop's pension, *i. e.* 10 *l.* for every archdeaconry, and proportionably for other dignities and peculiar jurisdictions, as may be seen in Newcourt's *Repertorium Canonicum*, vol. 1. & 2.

Next to episcopal jurisdiction is to be considered that of the *archdeacons*, whose number I have before limited to sixty, but find on a farther scrutiny they may be enlarged to seventy, or more; for the diocese of London alone has five, and other dioceses proportionable.

These archdeacons have their visitations twice yearly, *viz.* at Michaelmas and Easter, both which afford them plentiful harvests, in their collections of procurations, synodals, and other profitable perquisites. For,

1. At

1. At their Easter visitations, the ministers within their respective districts pay them synodals, which they denominate their *paschal rents*, taking of each parson six or seven shillings, some more, some less; for these payments are not all alike, but, I suppose, raised or lessened according to the value of the benefice; but none must come empty-handed.

2. At their Michaelmas visitations the same ministers pay their *procurations*, some seven or eight, some ten or twelve shillings, some more, some less. But it is judged, that, on a moderate computation, the archdeacons of England do yearly collect for procurations only, six or seven thousand pounds.

The next jurisdiction to be considered, is that of deans and their chapters. But having already mentioned the several kinds of deans, and the manner of exercising their jurisdictions, I shall not at present plunge any further into this bottomless *Barathron* of ecclesiastical officers, and their rapines; but beg leave to conclude with the words of a late eminent prelate of the church of England, viz. Dr. G. Burnet, bishop of Sarum, who, in a familiar discourse with me on this very subject, freely declared, *That the canon law and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were originally derived from hell; and that thither it ought to be sent again:* And observing me to be somewhat startled at his words, he continued
thus;

thus; *A greater than I, even an archbishop* (naming Grindal) *was also of this opinion: To which I only add,*

*Heu! heu! hæc è sulphureo fonte ecclesiasticorum exurgunt! **

Vide Mat. Paris, p. 542. Col. 2.

These observations I humbly submit to your just and equitable enquiry; and am (with all due respect)

Your most obedient servant,

W. BOHUN,

* *i. e.* Alas! alas! these things spring from the infernal fountain of ecclesiastics!

HIGH-

HIGH-FLOWN
EPISCOPAL and PRIESTLY
CLAIMS

Freely Examined:

In a DIALOGUE betwixt a COUNTRY
GENTLEMAN and a COUNTRY VICAR,

WHEREIN

Church - Authority, Confirmation, Absolution;
the Burial of the Dead, the Power of Bishops
to give the Holy Ghost, and of Priests to forgive
Sins; the Consecration of Churches and Church-
yards, and Bowing toward the Altar and the
East; are particularly considered.

To which is Prefixed,

An ADMONITION to those who are
press'd to come to CONFIRMATION.

First printed in the Year 1737.

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Church-Authority, Confirmation, Absolution;
the Burial of the Dead, the Power of Binding
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yards, and bowing toward the Altar and the
Eucharist, are particularly considered.

To which is added,

An ADDITION to those who are
permitted to come to CONFIRMATION.

Printed in the Year 1737.



A

SERIOUS ADMONITION

TO

Those who are pressed to offer themselves to CONFIRMATION.

Dear Brethren and Friends,

IT is of infinite importance both to your comfort in this world, and to your happiness in the other, that you have right notions of *religion*. You will take, therefore, in good part this sincere attempt to assist you herein. The *devil* hath been ever busy to take off men's attention from *real* and *true religion*; and to amuse them with *rites* and *forms*, and things of a ceremonial nature, which have really nothing of religion in them. He first deceives, and then destroys.

VOL. III.

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If

If we look into the Pagan world, we see men dancing round ugly idols; howling, weeping, cutting themselves with lances; committing the most filthy and abominable acts; sacrificing one another; yea, throwing their own struggling and shrieking babes into the arms of a burning image, to be there tortured and consumed.—And this with them is *religion*: 'Tis done for their soul's health; and to expiate their sins, and reconcile 'em to their gods.

If we look into the *Jewish world*, there we see them devoutly busy in washing garments, hands, and cups; they dare not touch *this* thing, nor eat *that*, for fear o being defiled; and are scrupulously exact in tithing even pot-herbs, mint, annise and cummin.—This with them is *religion*; and thus they hope to reconcile themselves to God, and secure the divine favour.

If we look further into *Popish* countries, we see *religion* disguised under other monstrous and odd forms. Be punctual to your beads; come often to confession and mass; be strict in your penances, liberal to the priest, zealous against heretics; hate, kill, damn, as far as 'tis in your power, all who are not of your church.—And *this* will prove you to be *religious*; *this* is for your soul's health; *this* is what fits you for the presence of God, the company of angels, for that state of perfect wisdom, love, peace, prepared in heaven by Jesus Christ.

To come nearer home. What is it to be *religious* with multitudes amongst ourselves? Why, to have been baptized into this true and established church of England; to have had godfathers and godmothers, and the sign of the cross; to have been confirmed by the bishop, and solemnly declared regenerated and forgiven by this ambassador of Christ; to keep constantly one's church; to come *often* to the sacrament, *never* to a conventicle; to take the eucharist in our last sickness; and in the name of the holy Trinity to be absolved by the priest; to have burial read over us, and to lie interred and rotting in holy ground.—These seem to be the chief things which multitudes among us mean by *religion*: *These* they count highly *profitable*, if not *necessary* to their soul's health; and a defect in such things shall oftentimes give greater uneasiness and offence than defects of a moral kind.

The discourses and conduct of many of our clergy too manifestly cherish this dangerous mistake. What a stress do they lay upon *rites, forms, habits, places of worship*, and various other things, of which the scriptures say not a word; infusing into men's minds a superstitious veneration for them, and treating those who dislike 'em, and who worship GOD in a more primitive and *scriptural* way, with anger and contempt.

But, dear brethren and friends, *be not deceived* by such amusements as these. GOD is not mocked.

Remember the words of our great lawgiver and judge. *IN VAIN do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* If you have no religion but *this*, as sure as God is in heaven, you can never get thither. *True religion* is something far different from all this; it consists in the right knowledge, sincere love and imitation of the blessed God; in a heart dead to the honours, riches and pleasures of this present world, through a real belief of the doctrines of Christ; it consists in the subduing our appetites, the right government of our passions, the practice of universal righteousness, temperance, meekness, &c. and in a pure and unfeigned *love to men* of all countries; and to christians of all parties and denominations around us. Without a temper and conduct thus formed after the pattern and laws of Jesus Christ, neither the hands of a hundred bishops, nor the absolution of a thousand priests can do you the least good. They may with great seeming solemnity *pronounce you forgiven*, and in the name of the sacred Trinity assure you of the divine favour:—But 'tis to your infinite peril, christians, if you lay any stress on such *religious charms*; they are but *wood, hay, stubble*, which superstitious and designing men have built upon the christian doctrine, and will never stand the fire of the last great and trying day, but be miserably burnt up. *The kingdom of God, or true religion, is not meat and drink, (i. e. consists not in rites and forms, and ceremonial*

observances) *but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And he that in these things serveth Christ, (of what party or sect soever he be) this is the man that is accepted of God; and however he be now cast out and reproached, he will finally be approved and honoured of men. Rom. xiv. 17, 18.*

The occasion of my offering you these reflections at present, is the great stir the clergy around you are making to bring their parishioners to be confirmed by the bishop. How highly they extol it; and with what earnestness press it both publicly and from house to house; sometimes by threats, sometimes by fair words, constraining young and old to come and receive this *episcopal grace*; yourselves can bear them witness. But that all this zeal is either *artifice* and *trick*; or else, *ignorance* and *superstition*, the following dialogue will help you to perceive. I thought it needful to expose, in a true light, those claims of episcopal and priestly authority, because I am persuaded they are of very dangerous consequence: a snare to the weak; an offence to the wise; an artifice of the devil to lull men asleep in vice; subversive of the peace and good order of our state; and highly injurious and disgraceful to our religion.

I am confirmed in this persuasion by a little book, which is industriously scattered by the priests on these occasions, intituled, *Short instructions for*

them that are preparing for confirmation, by way of question and answer, &c.

'Tis there asked, p. 6. *By what authority was confirmation instituted in the church?* *Ans.* Our church hath declared concerning confirmation, (Can. 60.) *that it hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudable custom, continued from the apostles times, that all bishops should lay their hands upon children baptized and instructed in the catechism of christian religion, praying over them and blessing them, that they may receive the Holy Ghost.* A confutation of this, see in some of the following pages.

In the same page you are taught, That, by the prayers and imposition of the bishops hands, God conveys the special gifts and graces of his holy Spirit, and thereby confirms every worthy candidate.——

Now what makes a person a worthy candidate, the office itself has expressly determined, *viz.* The being able to say the short catechism; and a renewing the solemn promise and vow which was made for him in baptism, &c. To every person who does this, the instructor affirms, God by the bishop's hands conveys the special gifts and graces, &c. even these seven-fold gifts; 1. *Wisdom.* 2. *Understanding.* 3. *Counsel.* 4. *Ghostly strength.* 5. *Knowledge.* 6. *True godliness.* 7. *Holy fear.* There is doubtless something mystical in the number *Seven*, else why should the instructor puzzle his own and his pupil's brains with a curious distinction betwixt *wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge.*——

With

With equal propriety, as these gifts are made *seven*, they might have been made *seventeen*, or even *seventy*: But because Seven is reckoned a *sacred* number, and we read of *seven spirits before the throne*, Rev. i. 4. *Seven stars, seven lamps, &c.* the mystery *Seven* must be here spied out in the church's office; though she, *good lady!* (i. e. three or four pious, but fallible men, who drew up this office) never dreamt, I presume, that any such mystery would, by the wisdom of after-ages, be discovered therein.—If one were disposed critically to remark, it might be asked, How *true godliness* comes to be here reckoned amongst the gifts of the Holy Spirit? It belongs surely to the other head, of its *graces*, not its *gifts*; and thus *the instructor*, forgetting himself, pag. 11. calls it—*That grace by which, &c.* But as the mystical and perfect number *seven* could not else have been found in this prayer of the church, 'tis presumed that, by the candid reader, such an absurdity may be overlooked.

Page 14. 'tis asked, *Quest. Is the Holy Ghost given now in laying on of hands as to the first christians?* Answ. *Yes, the Holy Ghost* (i. e. *the gifts of the Holy Ghost*) *is as truly given in laying on of hands now, as to the first christians, though not altogether in the same manner or degree.* And in several other parts of this performance, the person *confirmed* is considered as having by that rite undoubtedly *received the Holy Ghost.*—So that, in short,

the plain design of these instructions, and of the clergy in scattering them, and of their cherishing in the people such a veneration for this rite, is to inculcate a belief, *That the bishops are even now, by laying on their hands, and prayer, able truly and indeed to give the Holy Ghost.* A belief, which, when God in his great displeasure to these sinful lands shall give them up to so strong a delusion as to admit, we shall be then ripe for the vilest slavery, and be again cursed with ecclesiastical tyranny and chains. A full refutation of these enormous pretensions you will find in the ensuing dialogue.

I am persuaded some of the most excellent of our bishops and priests disclaim such pretensions, and think *soberly* of the *powers* given them by God: and such will not, I hope, be offended at the freedom here taken with the extravagant claims which are made in their names. I unfeignedly reverence the learned, the wise, and the sober of that order; and think a faithful and good clergy, who shall teach men true virtue, and by their discourses keep the people from the wrong opinions and practice, into which ignorance and superstition naturally lead them, to be a great blessing to a nation, and as useful ministers in the state as any it employs: and I heartily thank God, and congratulate you, my friends, that there are so many of this character among the clergy of our land. I would be far from attempting to lessen your esteem of such;
for

for they merit your veneration, and ought to be *esteemed very highly for their work's sake*: but when, under the specious cover of the *priestly character*, they grasp at undue power, and act not as ministers (*i. e. servants*) but as *lords* over Christ's people; when they depart from the simplicity and purity of the gospel, and cause separations and divisions in the christian church, by requiring things as necessary to christian communion, which Christ has left indifferent; when they *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, lay a stress upon things upon which the scriptures have laid none, and would have you believe, that as *the immediate officers and representatives of Christ on earth*, they have power to decree rites, to determine controversies in points of faith, *authoritatively to forgive sins, and really to give the Holy Ghost, &c.* When any whether bishops or priests, thus *stretch themselves beyond measure*, and think of themselves *not soberly, but more highly than they ought to think*, we are then in duty bound to enter our bold protest against them, and to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not be again intangled with any yoke of bondage*. This duty we owe to God, to Christ, to our excellent religion, (which are all on this account greatly blasphemed and reproached by unbelievers) our duty to our country, to posterity, yea, to the unhappy persons themselves who make these enormous claims, loudly calls us forth, christians, strenuously to oppose them. This

was the very mean by which *papery* of old opened itself a way, and crept into the world; and thus it grew up to that dreadful and oppressive tyranny, which hath long grievously corrupted and harrassed the church. As providence has broken the heavy yoke from our necks, let us not tamely suffer ambitious and artful men to slide it on us again. Remember, *we are called unto liberty*: by our great charter, the gospel, we are freed from all authority and power of men in matters of religion: *One* only is our *master* and authoritative director in this great affair, even Christ; and all we, princes and subjects, bishops and mechanics, clergy and laymen, all we are brethren; we stand all upon the same bottom, and none of us can warrantably claim the least superiority or dominion over his brother.

If what is here offered gives you juster notions of religion, and christian liberty; if it helps you to see thro' the designs of crafty, the arrogance of haughty, and the weakness of superstitious men; if it takes you off from a wrong dependence on ceremonies and rites, and things of human device, and assists you to place it more upon the practice of justice, temperance, godliness, and a diffusive benevolence and charity to all men: I shall count myself happy in having in any wise contributed to this; and may *God*, the father of lights, and *Jesus* the great instructor and head of the church, fill us with all wisdom, that we may understand the glorious

rious liberty into which he has called us, and walk worthy of it.

To his grace and divine Spirit I humbly commend this attempt towards reviving his primitive and pure religion, and wiping off that reproach which the avarice, the superstition and pride of men have brought upon it: even to Him, who *out of weakness can make strong*; and *who sends by whom he will send*. To Him be the glory, the victory, and the majesty, world without end. *Amen.*



HIGH:



HIGH-FLOWN
EPISCOPAL and PRIESTLY
CLAIMS

Freely Examined :

In a DIALOGUE betwixt a COUNTRY
GENTLEMAN and a COUNTRY VICAR.

Gent. GOOD-morrow, Mr. ——— : Whence
comes this early visit ?

Vic. I wish you, Sir, a happy day : The reason of my present visit is a letter I last evening received from the bishop, signifying his intention to visit this part of his diocese, in order to *confirm* : I came therefore to give you this early notice, that your numerous young family may get themselves prepared.

Gent. I am obliged, Sir, by your kind intention : but as to the business of *confirmation*, I confess

fels I am not well satisfied ; scarce as to the *lawfulness*, much less as to the *expedience* or *usefulness* of it.

Vic. I am surprized to hear this from a person of your good sense and affection to our church.

Gent. How great soever your surprize may be, mine is not less, to see men of such piety, learning and sense, as many of our bishops and clergy are, pressing upon the people, and practising over them this *odd*, if I might speak it without offence, I would say this *superstitious* and *delusive* rite.—As for my affection to our establishment, I own I have lately read, with attention and pleasure, the *Bangorian Controversy* ; and am thence fully convinced, that no powers upon earth, neither ecclesiastical nor civil, no king nor parliament, nor councils nor synods, have any the least authority in matters of religion.—That Christ alone is king in his kingdom, the church,——and that therefore for any man, or bodies of men, to claim to themselves *a power to decree rites and ceremonies*, and *authority in controversies of faith* *, seems to look like an invasion of Christ's throne. That consequently those who claim this power seem to be usurpers in Christ's kingdom ; and that those who submit to it, do so far withdraw their allegiance from Christ, and own *another Lord*.

* XXth article of the church of England.

Vic. You appear, Sir, a little warm ; but have surely overshot the bishop's mark ; and carried his principles much farther than he designed. For after all, that great prelate has wrote against human authority in matters of religion, you see he continues fixed to our established church, and is one of the strongest pillars and brightest ornaments of it.

Gent. I highly reverence that excellent and great man ; I think him a glorious light raised up by God to bless this happy age : I admire the strength with which he pleads the rights of the christian church ; and am persuaded his principles, if thoroughly pursued would establish christianity upon its only true and sure bottom, would restore its antient glory, and surround it with bulwarks far stronger than any laws a king and parliament can enact. But how to reconcile his lordship's *principles* with his *practice* in subscribing, and submitting to human authority in the kingdom or church of Christ, is not *mine*, but his *lordship's* to consider. I confess I was not a little startled to see in the public news-papers, that his lordship also was preparing to *visit* and *confirm* in several parts of his diocese.

Vic. But, what is there, Sir, in our office of *confirmation* which gives you such disgust ?

Gent. Why to be plain ; first, there is nothing so much as *plausible*, much less *rational*, to be urged for it ; and secondly, there is a great deal of both to be said against it. There is nothing
plausible

plausible to be urged for it, either from *reason*, or scripture.

Vic. Not from *reason*, I own; for 'tis a matter of revelation; an instituted rite of the christian church; like baptism and the Lord's supper.

Gent. If it be an instituted rite, shew me where it is instituted.

Vic. I do not pretend it to be instituted in express words; but it seems to be an appendix to baptism, without which 'tis not *compleat*: For thus we read, *Acts* viii. 14. when Philip had converted and baptized the Samaritans, the apostles *sent Peter and John to lay their hands on them*.

Gent. If baptism be *not compleat* without this rite, as I know some of the clergy, when recommending it, affirm; then the commission and form of baptism our Lord gave his disciples, when he bid them, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c.* were *not compleat*: And all who have been *thus* baptized by them and their successors since, have been *not compleatly* baptized. But this I presume, you will not assert. -As for the apostles being sent to lay their hands on the Samaritans, the design of it is expressly mentioned, *viz. That they might give them the Holy Ghost*, ver. 17, *i. e.* His extraordinary and miraculous gifts, such as praying, prophesying, speaking with tongues, &c. to form them into a church. These gifts, 'tis plain, were visible, obvious to sense; for 'tis said, when *Simon saw that through*
laying

laying on the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, &c. ver. 18. Besides, as Dr. Whitby well observes, if they laid not their hands on *All* who had been baptized, it makes nothing for confirmation. If they did, then Simon Magus also was *confirmed*, and received the Holy Ghost, which you will hardly admit.

Vic. But as the apostles, by prayer and laying on their hands, antiently conferred the *extraordinary* gifts, why may not the bishops, their successors, now by the same rite confer the *ordinary* gifts of the holy Ghost?

Gent. This, I am sensible, our high-flown churchmen would fain have us believe. The little book intituled, * *Short Instructions for them that are preparing for confirmation, &c.* which you lately left with my family, boldly speaks out; and is not ashamed to assert †, *That the Holy Ghost* (i. e. *the gifts of the Holy Ghost*) *is as truly given in laying on of hands now, as to the first christians.*--Even those gifts *which are of perpetual use for sanctifying and strengthning every member of Christ's church, and equally necessary for all christians in all ages,—and without which none can be saved.* This is verily a strange assertion, and if it be not well supported, instead of getting honour to our bishops will be apt to draw upon them displeasure and contempt. 'Tis a matter of vast moment,

and strange consequences must attend it, if this claim can be made good: Let me therefore observe,

1. That this pretension seems not to consist with the office itself; for therein the bishop owns that the person on whom he is going to lay his hands is actually *regenerated by the Holy Ghost*, and has therefore *already* received this heavenly gift; so that he does not lay on hands *after the example of the apostles*, as the office affirms; for *they* did it, by that rite, to confer the Holy Ghost on those who had *not* before received him; whereas the bishop lays his hands on those whom he confesses *already* to have him.

2. This doctrine, if true, convicts and condemns the whole venerable bench of bishops of most inexcusable neglect and cruelty to the souls of men. For if they *can really thus confer those sacred gifts*, why, in the name of God, who hath thus marvellously impowered them (an unbeliever may ask) do they saunter about courts, and waste their precious months in parliamentary attendance? Far nobler and more important work demands their regard. Thousands of wretched souls languish in their several dioceses, for want of those *heavenly Gifts* * their hands can impart. Let the cries of captive and dying spirits from every corner of our land, come up into the ears of these right reverend and holy LORDS.—Come

* What those gifts are, see in the *Admonition*.

out,

out, *sacred fathers*, from the grandeurs both of royal and parliamentary courts; and from the luxury and ease of your own princely palaces: You are *successors* of the apostles in the wonderful power of *giving the Holy Ghost*; *succeed* them in their travels, their labours, their watchings.—Can his Lordship of London justify it to the many myriads in our *American plantations*, of whom he has taken the *episcopal* charge, if, at least once in his life, he doth not visit and disperse amongst them these *spiritual donations*, the great LORD of the church hath enabled him to bestow? It may be attended, indeed, with some danger and toil to his Lordship's *body*; but the conferring *any measure* of the Holy Ghost on so many thousand *souls*, must infinitely outweigh any consideration of worldly ease.—So that, if from their lordships *practice*, we may judge of their *real sense* as to this matter, we may confidently affirm, that they believe no such divine virtue to flow from their hands as the deluded multitude imagine; and that they think themselves *no more able really to give the Holy Ghost*, than any of their neighbours.

3. This high claim is evidently contradicted by fact and experience. The instructor above cited, says, Page 13, *that the fruits of the Holy Ghost are the twelve following graces, love, joy, patience, &c. and by these fruits we shall know whether we still have the seven-fold gifts of the holy spirit.* If then a person has not those graces, by
this

this it may be known that he has not the *gifts*; or in other words, that the bishop, when he pretended to *give* him the holy Ghost, did *not give* it him at all. Now let those who have passed under this strange solemnity, say,—Did they feel any moral change wrought upon their minds, by this laying on of the bishop's hands? Have they found themselves *since* more meek, patient, temperate, &c. than before? Can those around, who converse with them, bear testimony to such moral change? Yea, and is this true, not only as to a single instance or two; but is it *generally* the effect of this magnified rite? Do not people usually return from it as ignorant, as proud, as covetous, &c. as they went thither? fact and experience put it beyond doubt.

But what I chiefly insist on is,

4. That this doctrine and high claim is extremely dangerous to our *civil liberties*, and threatens our happy order and constitution *in state*. For if our bishops can now *really bestow the special graces and gifts of the holy Ghost*, and are the *immediate officers and representatives of Christ* (as this Instructor, page 6, affirms) who can enough *venerate*, I had almost said *adore*, these *spiritual lords*? An ecclesiastical censure or excommunication from the bishop's court, may soon strike the same terror into the good subjects of Great-Britain, as the bulls and excommunications of a certain bishop of old.——What difference is there but in the sound, betwixt being the *vicar* of
of

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of *Christ*, and his *immediate officer and representative* on earth; *This*, the English bishop is; *That* the bishop of Rome. But let *this* opinion of the episcopal authority prevail, and a wide door is set open for all the miseries and disorders of the papal tyranny to return. What are the crowns of kings; or what all the *civil* blessings they can give, or secure to us, if compared with those *special gifts and graces of the holy spirit* the bishop can bestow? I have far greater reason therefore to *love* and to *fear* my *bishop* than my *King*: His majesty can but protect and do good to my body; his lordship can enrich and beautify my soul with the *sevenfold gifts*, &c. Give way therefore, ye kings; rise up ye princes and nobles of the earth; kneel down and pay homage at the *episcopal* feet.—To such extravagant heights do the powers here claimed naturally carry the *episcopal* character; tending to lay kings at the feet of those *ambassadors and representatives* of *Christ*; and to make crowns and sceptres depend on their will. For what can the most absolute or powerful princes do, when their people are bewitched with a superstitious veneration of an *higher character* than theirs? They are at once stript of their supremacy, made dependent and enslaved.—

This was the very manner the proud bishop of Rome got his antient dominion over the kings of the earth.—They had stomach to *resent* these claims of the holy usurpers; and inwardly *dis-*
dained

dained the homage they paid them. But what could they do? Their people had drank deep, even to madness, of the cup of priestly infatuation: They thought their bishops could dispense the blessings or the curses of heaven at their will.—And who can then blame them for having the persons and the decrees of these *representatives of Christ*, in greater veneration than those of *emperors or kings*?

Thus Antichrist, or the papal tyranny, at first arose in the church; 'twas by claims only of *spiritual*, that he grasped all his *earthly* power: And in whatever age or kingdom of the world the like notions of *episcopal authority* prevail, there it will, there it *must* have the like fatal effects. It undermines the thrones of kings, and gives up their dominions to the mercy and disposal of these *immediate officers of Christ*. These claims therefore if not founded upon the clearest evidence, are, by all good subjects and good christians, to be rejected with abhorrence: They shake the very basis of our happy constitution, set the *mitre* above the *crown*, and bring a grievous yoke upon our necks, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

I wonder, by the way, whether the *kings* and *princes* royal of *Great-Britain* are ever confirmed by our bishops. If they *can* certainly give the *spirit of wisdom, of counsel, of Ghostly strength, &c.*—as is pretended, the princes who govern us, have, surely, always great need of this invaluable gift; and

and therefore ought to kneel down (or if they refuse, good people may think, ought to be forced to kneel down) and humbly receive it.—But how would a court of British nobles brook it, to see their sovereign kneeling at a bishop's feet? It would give them too strong an image of the homage claimed from crowned heads by a certain bishop of old, and of the dreadful evils which sprang from it, to be easily borne.

Vic. There is some weight, I own, in what you offer. I will not make myself answerable for those high claims of my brethren.—But to return to *confirmation*,—tho' it might not be fully proved from this viii. of the *Acts*, nor from *Heb.* vi. 2. where we read of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands—(for the apostle probably is there speaking of some Jewish * washings and rites) yet the authority of the church is, I think, sufficient to enjoin it: 'Twas an ancient usage in the church; and, I own, our office in the Common-prayer seems to ground its practice, at least the qualifications of those who are to receive it, rather upon the authority of the church, than upon any express scripture; for it says, *To the end that confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the church hath thought good to order, &c.*

Gent. Let me soberly ask you, Sir, what is that church which is here said to order? 'Tis

* Vide Pierce in *Lec.*

plain,

plain, from what follows, that 'tis the *church of England*. But, who or what is this church of England, which thus *orders* and appoints? Is it not *the king and parliament of England*? Is not *all* authority, both *ecclesiastical* and *civil*, within these realms, lodged solely in them? They, and they only, *order* and decree what ceremonies and religious rites shall be practised in this church; and what all its bishops and priests shall believe, and subscribe as articles of their faith. So that 'tis evident beyond dispute that when we talk of *our church*, as *ordering* or appointing—we mean *our king and our parliament*.

But what authority have *these* (I speak it with due reverence) to make laws in *Christ's kingdom*, the church, and to prescribe rites and forms of worship which Christ hath not prescribed? If they have authority to prescribe *one* such rite, they have authority to prescribe *ten*; and if *ten*, *ten thousand*: And thus a portentous way is opened for the tyranny and superstition, which the reformation shook off, to return upon us amain. For my own part, I desire never to forget that admonition of our Lord, *Matt. xv. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

If *the church*, i. e. the king and parliament of England, have authority to *order*, That the *cross* in one sacrament and *kneeling* at the other, shall be the indispensable conditions of our receiving

ceiving these signs of the christian covenant, they have equal authority to *order chrism, spittle, prostration* at the communion-table, or any rites of the *Greek* or *Roman* church. And what then becomes of our boasted reformation? It only *changed* the dreadful yoke, not *broke* it from our necks. We withdrew our consciences from the *pope and cardinals of Rome*, but 'twas only to subject them to the *king and parliament of Great-Britain*.— If *these* be the principles on which our reformation stands, 'tis the *sword*, not properly the *church* of England; its *soldiers*, not its *priests*; its *armies, and fleets*, not its *arguments and writings*, that are the bulwark of the reformation. And some may be apt to say, seeing either *the king and parliament*, or *the pope*, must have the homage of my conscience, I will give it to the latter; for his claim to that homage, as being a spiritual person, a successor of the apostles— seems best founded of the two; and the advantages he promises by pardons, indulgencies, &c. are much greater than any to be expected on the other side.

Vic. But why should you talk, Sir, of the *homage of conscience*? The church, or, if you must have it, the king and parliament of England, require no such homage: Have they not granted a toleration to all protestants, who are not satisfied with its forms to worship God in their own way?

Gent.

Gent. True, I remember the toleration, and think it one of the most glorious and equitable *acts our church ever passed*; for, till it enacted this law, we had the very essence of popery incorporated into our government: We as really claimed infallibility, and acted agreeably to that claim, as *his holiness* himself; and with the tyranny and enormous power of which we stripped the *church of Rome*, we gravely decked *our own*. But, thank heaven! our church is now in good measure recovered from this *delirium*, and no longer compels any by the powerful convictions of pillories, fines, imprisonments, &c. to come in; but tho' it does not thus tyrannize over those who are *without* its pale, are not all its own members still held under the heavy yoke? To be a genuine member of the church of England, 'tis necessary that we *believe its articles*, and *worship according to its rites*. Now, must not all who believe its articles, acknowledge it to have *power to decree rites and ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith*? Agreeably to this acknowledgement, must they not receive the two sacraments of the christian covenant, loaded with *other rites* than Christ himself hath appointed? Must they not firmly *hold the catholic faith contained in the Athanasian creed*, and declare that *whosoever doth not keep it whole and undefiled, shall without doubt perish everlastingly*? — Since then our civil powers make *other rites* necessary to our

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admission into *their church*, than Christ has made necessary to our admission into *his*; and since they make the belief of *other doctrines* necessary to salvation than Christ hath made necessary, what must be the consequence, but that *Christ's church*, and *their church* are not the same; and that all the members of this latter must pay an homage of conscience to other governors besides him?

'Tis bishops and priests that pay them this homage, by subscribing those articles; and practising those rites as *necessary terms* of christian communion with them, which *their authority* hath decreed, and thereby bow down and acknowledge *another* lord or director in religious affairs, besides Jesus Christ; and all its several members also pay them this homage, by submitting to those rights this *foreign power* hath enjoined.

And, if I have not trespassed too far upon your candour already, I would beg leave to observe, that the distinction betwixt *church* and *state*, which hath occasioned so much clamour, is entirely without foundation, and nothing but an empty sound. The *church of England* is as meerly a *civil thing*, and as much a *creature of the state*, as either of our courts of justice, or our offices of heraldry, excise, &c. or any other branch or constitution of our civil government. All its officers, *archbishops*, *bishops*, *deans*, *archdeacons*, *prebendaries*, *canons*, *priests*, &c. are as really and as much *state-officers*, as the *judges*,
colonels,

colonels, captains, heralds, excisemen, &c. They are all *alike* made and unmade by the civil powers, are directed, limited, controuled in the execution of their several offices; commanded *how*, and *when*, and *where* they shall act. The king is as much the head of the *church*, as of the *army*, and of the *army* as of the *church*; the fountain of the power by which the bishops and priests, as of that by which the colonel or the corporal acts. The officers of both, *alike* owe their very being to parliamentary authority, and their maintenance and support to parliamentary grants: And whatever alteration the wisdom of our legislature may see fit to make in the frame or support of either, they have *alike* power to make; and 'tis equally absurd and treasonable to say that our king and parliament can alter the revenues of the customs or excise, and apply them to other public uses than now they are applied to, as that they can thus alienate or apply the revenues of the church.

Vic. You carry matters to a vast length, Sir; but, when I say 'was an ancient usage of the church, I mean of the *primitive* christian church, in the second and third centuries, who commonly laid on hands to confirm those who had been baptized, as Tertullian and Cyprian most undeniably witness.

Gent. I own Cyprian and Tertullian speak of this rite as practised in their times ; but I must beg leave to observe,

1. That confirmation in those days *immediately* followed baptism, and was not deferred till many years after, as it is amongst us.

2. They thought that no person was regenerated by the Holy Ghost till hands were laid on him. *We do not, says Tertullian*, receive the Holy Ghost by baptism, but being cleansed by water we are prepared for the Holy Ghost.——And hands are laid on the body, that the soul may be illuminated by the Holy spirit†.* But our church is better taught : The bishop declares to Almighty God, that these his servants *ARE regenerated both by water and the Holy Ghost*, even before he lays his hands upon them. He therefore does it not after the example of those antient fathers, neither, as well as not after that of the apostles, as was before observed.

3. In those early days, *priests* confirmed as well as *bishops* ; but now the bishop's hands are not supposed to give the Holy Ghost ; yet, as if there were some superior sacredness in this, than in

* Non quod in aquis Spiritum Sanctum consequamur sed in aqua emundati.——Spiritus Sancto præparamur. De Baptis. cap. vi.

† Caro manus impositione adumbratur, ut & anima spiritu illuminetur. De Resurrectione, cap. viii.

the priest's hands, this act is by the authority of our church confined to the bishop. But,

4. Men of learning and modesty surely will blush to ground this rite upon the authority of the antient church, because they know that *the same antient church* esteemed *unction with oil*, as important a part or appendix of baptism as this *laying on of hands*. He that is baptized, (*says Cyprian**) must of necessity be anointed, *that having received the chrism, or unction, he may become the anointed of God, and have the grace of Christ in himself*. And as this *unction* followed baptism, so *exorcism* went before it; the minister put his hand upon the person to be baptized, and breathed on his face, implying hereby the expelling of the devil; and thus he was prepared for *baptism* and *confirmation*, which were immediately to follow. Now as the *same antiquity* which recommends one of these rites, alike recommends them *all*, why are they not *all* alike received? Why do not our priests *exorcise* and *anoint*, as well as our bishops *confirm*? The one is *antique*, and therefore *as venerable* and *sacred* as the other.

Vic. No——But the wisdom of our church appears in dropping all that is extravagant in the practice of the antients; in not pretending to exorcise the devil, nor to confer the Holy Ghost by laying-on of hands; but only thus solemnly to

* Ungi quoque necesse est eum qui baptizatus sit, &c. Ep. ad Januar. de Bon. hæret.

call upon persons baptized in their infancy to renew their baptismal covenant, and to make a personal surrender of themselves to the holy trinity.

Gent. 'Tis surely very wise quite to drop antiquity, seeing 'tis granted on all hands, that so many extravagant and silly things were practised in the very antient church.—Did the bishop indeed, as you say, only solemnly call upon the people of his diocese to renew their baptismal covenant and to confirm it at the Lord's table, the rite might be very useful ; but as 'tis now managed, it appears to me an extremely *odd* and *unjustifiable thing* : It tends to propagate superstition, exposes christianity to contempt, and dangerously co-operates with the great deceiver of men's souls, by stifling their just fears and lulling them asleep in vice.—Well, the first of my assertions is, I hope, now pretty well cleared, *viz.* That there is nothing *plausible*, much less *rational*, to be urged *for* this rite. Will you favour me with your wonted goodness, whilst I go through the second, *viz.* that there is much to be said *against* it.

Vic. Argue, Sir, with your wonted calmness, and I will patiently attend.

Gent. By the order in our common-prayer, all persons baptized when they come to competent age, and are able to say the Lord's prayer, the creed, the ten commandments and the short catechism, are to be brought to confirmation.

tion*. The bishop having asked—*Whether they renew the solemn promise and vow, that was made in their name at baptism,* upon their answering, *we do,* declares in the most public and solemn manner, even in an address to God himself, *That he has vouchsafed to regenerate these his servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and to give them the forgiveness of all their sins;* and laying his hand upon the head of each particular person, *he certifies him, by that sign of God's favour, and gracious goodness towards him.*

Now this bishop they are taught to look upon as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, and a successor of the apostles, who had power to forgive sins; and when they hear this venerable person thus solemnly declaring, that God hath regenerated and forgiven them, can you blame them if they believe it, and in this confidence presume their souls to be in a safe state?

And as a full remission of sins is to be had on such easy terms, no wonder that thousands flock from all parts to be *bishoped*, many of them with like merriment as if going to a revel; and that persons of very vicious and profligate characters thrust themselves in, to be partakers of *this grace*. And I add, no wonder the deluded creatures, think-

* A great part of what follows concerning confirmation, absolution, and the burial of the dead, was published in the *Old Whig*, No. 126, 127.

ing their old score thus fully quitted, with fresh vigor begin a-new, and conclude the day (which is often the case) with drunkenness, riot, and shameful excess.

That ignorant and unthinking people should be thus easily deluded by pretences of priestly power, and be willing to receive *imposition of hands*, to certify them of God's favour in their regeneration and pardon, *without* parting with their vices and the trouble of repentance, is not so strange; but that such learned and pious men as our reverend bishops and clergy, who know the aptness of mankind to deceive themselves with false hopes, and the horrid danger of their so doing, that these should thus contribute to lull them asleep in vice, and without knowing their hearts, or having a due acquaintance with their lives, declare them in God's presence *regenerated and pardoned*, is a conduct truly surprising.

What warrant, in God's name, have they to pronounce a man's *sins* all forgiven, and himself *regenerated by the Holy Ghost*, upon no other grounds than his being able to answer the *questions of the short catechism*, and his professing that he does and will stand by his baptismal engagements? Is this the notion our right reverend prelates teach concerning regeneration; or do they really believe this to be the condition of *christian pardon*? Will a mere profession procure from God a certain and full forgiveness? Are good vows and resolutions declared

declared in the church, infallible proofs of regeneration by the Holy Ghost? Is promising that a man will repent and live godly in the world, that actual repentance which alone secures the divine favour? Do not our learned bishops know, that there are multitudes *who call Christ their Lord, i. e. who publicly profess to stand by their baptismal covenant, whom he will reject with abhorrence at last?* With what *conscience* then, or *face*, can a venerable prelate stand up and declare to *almighty God, that he hath regenerated and forgiven, &c.*? The expressions are couched in the most absolute and strongest terms; there is no condition implied; no intimation that their forgiveness depends upon their care *to keep and to live up to* their baptismal engagements. No, but though their whole life hath been a course of drunkenness, debauchery, &c. yet upon their being *able to say the Lord's prayer, &c.* and *promising they will repent*, the bishop solemnly pronounces a most *absolute pardon* on them; and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, appeals to God that he hath *forgiven them all their sins*. And lest this should be too little to satisfy the sinner, and perfectly allay the clamours of his upbraiding conscience, he lays his *sacred hand* on him, and tells *almighty and everlasting God*, that he *doth it after the example of his holy apostles, to certify him by this token of his favour and gracious goodness towards him, i. e. that he is forgiven and regenerated by the Holy Ghost.*

Vic. To interrupt you, Sir, a moment.—But to prevent persons of immoral lives from thrusting themselves in to partake of *this grace*, none are to be confirmed but those whose names, by the curates of their respective parishes, are given in to the bishop.

Gent. Must the *bishop* then, in a matter of so vast importance, act by implicit faith in the curate? Whomsoever a curate shall think proper to recommend, is his recommendation a sufficient ground for his lordship *confidently* to declare him regenerated and forgiven? Are all our country curates men of such *probity, wisdom, temperance, care*, that the bishop can without scruple repose so extraordinary a confidence in them?—I am really astonished! Besides, there is not a word in the whole office which gives the curate any instruction to regard the *moral conduct* of those he recommends: If they can *answer the questions of the short catechism*, that is ALL required of him; upon this, they are ordered to be brought to the bishop.—And, agreeably to this excellent constitution, upon almost every such occasion, very immoral and wicked persons are seen *receiving upon their knees episcopal absolution*; and are certified by the bishop's hands of God's gracious goodness towards them, &c.

Let me ask you, Sir, is it any breach of charity to suppose that, amongst the vast crouds which present themselves on such occasions, there *may be*,
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and often are a great number, whom GOD, *who knows their hearts*, knows to be men of corrupt minds, and to be still under the prevailing power of their lusts? Can the bishop himself, in any judgment of charity, suppose there are not many such? How then does he dare to declare to God that he hath *fully forgiven these his servants*, when God at that very time knows them NOT *to be his servants*, and hath not at all forgiven them? Or, How will he presume to lay his hand on such to assure them of *God's gracious goodness*,—i. e. of their regeneration and forgiveness, when they are absolute strangers to repentance, and can have no title or claim to the blessings attending it? Is not this to address heaven with a falshood upon the tongue, and in a very dangerous and bold manner to trifle with *God and man*? 'Tis great presumption surely in any who cannot search the heart, to pronounce in so absolute and unconditionate a manner, concerning any of their fellow-creatures, that *God hath forgiven him all his sins*, &c. The apostles themselves durst not *thus pronounce* upon any christians in their days, unless by the immediate suggestion of the Holy Spirit: How came their successors to be thus more knowing and able? rather let it be said, *more rash and bold* than they!

But see in what absurdities such pretensions involve men. — We read, *Acts viii.* that Simon Magus *believed and was baptized*, and continued

some time making a credible profession of christianity; no question he could say *the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and answer some of the questions in the catechism*. Now, had one of our bishops been to visit Samaria at that time, he would without scruple have prayed over this vile impostor, laid hands on him, and with ghostly eyes lift up to heaven, have informed God of this wonderful secret, *that he had forgiven him all his sins, and regenerated him by the Holy Ghost*. But, might not the *Most High*, who will be approached with reverence, have justly rebuked the insolence of such a prelate, when he, from whom nothing could be hid, well knew that Simon's profession was an accursed dissimulation; and that, even after his baptism, *his heart was not right with God*; and that he was yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, as Peter and John plainly told him, exhorting him to repent, and thereby approved themselves faithful bishops or overseers, and freed themselves from his blood.

And now, Sir, I hope you think me to stand acquitted of each part of my promise, having proved, that there is very little to be said *for* this *bishoping* or *confirmation*; but a great deal to be said *against* it.

Vic. I own there is something plausible in what you have offered;—but as the *bishop*, not the *curate*, is the chief actor in this solemnity, upon *him*, if there be any due, must the blame be chiefly laid.

laid.—However, it shall, I hope, a little cool my eager passion for the lawn,—make me bless myself in my innocence, and be thankful I am no bishop.

Gent. And yet perhaps not so innocent, nor happy neither, Sir, as you imagine. There are parts of your own office as a priest, which are equally, nay more absurd and dangerous to the souls of men, than this part of the bishops. But—I have too far tried both your patience and candor to enter upon a fresh point.—

Vic. You know, Sir, I am no bigot. Truth never shuns, because it never suffers by the strictest search. There is nothing I desire more than to approve myself to God; and fully to know, and faithfully to discharge my duty, as a minister of Jesus Christ: You may depend, therefore, upon my candid and patient attention to any further remarks.

Gent. What think you then, Sir, of those two parts of your office, *the absolution of sick penitents, and the burial of the dead?*

In the former, the sick person being moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter; after such confession the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by the
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authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost *. The form is extremely solemn, and the matter of the last importance: It deserves therefore to be enquired,

I. *What and where is that church*, to which Christ has left this power? By what mark is it to be known, that we may all fly to it, to receive so extraordinary a benefit? Is it to the catholic and universal church; or to any national or provincial church; or, is it to every particular society of worshipping christians, that this high power is left? In what persons is it lodged? With the whole body of the people, who, according to scripture-language, and the doctrine of our own articles, are properly called *the church*; or, with the ministers or clergy, who are never so called? In the former part 'tis said *to be left to the church*; but in the latter, the priest claims it as his peculiar, a special trust appropriated to himself (*by the authority committed to me*——) to which, when his claim shall have been fully proved, his character shall be confessed indelible and sacred; and incense and the knee be offered him, as the representative of Christ on earth. But,

II. That our Lord Jesus Christ *hath* committed, CAN commit no such power to any fallible man or

* Vide order for the visitation of the sick, in the book of Common-Prayer.

body of men on earth, is most indisputably evident. For if Christ hath given to any a power *authoritatively* to absolve *those who are truly penitent*, he must also have given them a power to *know who are truly penitent*; else 'tis a power to do just nothing: for till they *know* them to be truly penitent, (*i. e.* till they can search their hearts) they cannot *authoritatively absolve* them; and if they cannot do it till then, they cannot do it at all: so that 'tis really a power to do what they *cannot do*, or a power to do nothing. And is this a power fit either for Christ to leave, or a wise clergy, in this age of free enquiry, to claim?

Further,

III. Had the priest any real power from Christ *authoritatively* to absolve from sin, yet surely he greatly errs in its application. The terms on which he absolves, are, by far, too *general* and *lax*. Upon a *special confession*, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, the priest is directed to absolve the sinner. But is *meer confession* of sin *all* the gospel demands, in order to its forgiveness? Must it not be *forsook* and *brok n off*, as well as *confessed*? Are not the most debauched, when sickness seizes, and death is thought to approach them, wont to *feel their consciences troubled*—readily to *confess* their sins, to express great sorrow, and to vow amendment, if spared?—But when the danger is blown off, is it hardly ever seen that they return not to their crimes with as
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mad a guſt as before? Is there one of a thouſand who remembers and performs the vows of his ſick-bed?

This our worthy clergy know, and often publicly complain of, when they preſs to *preſent* repentance; and yet—hard and unhappy lot! in direct contradiction to this ſenſe of their own mind, to the expreſs terms on which pardon is promiſed in the goſpel, and to their moſt ſolemn and public warnings not to truſt to ſuch ſick-bed ſorrows: —In contradiction to all theſe, when the ſick ſinner ſends for them, and thus confeſſes and laments his ſins, and deſires abſolution, they are directed and required, with all poſſible ſolemnity, even in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, to abſolve him from all his crimes, and to declare him fully forgiven. Strange trifling with heaven, and the immortal ſouls of men! How dare I, in the name of the ſacred Trinity, *aſſure* a man that he is abſolved from *all* his ſins, when I am *not ſure* he is abſolved? Yea, how dare I thus aſſure him, when the only grounds of my doing it, are but the ſame ſigns of repentance which a thouſand ſinners give, who are yet held under the power and guilt of their crimes?

In a court of human judicature, what would that man be deemed, who ſhould declare, in the *name of God*, a thing to be done, which he is *not ſure* is done? Or, call heaven to witneſs to the

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certainty of what he is not at all certain of? Is it less wicked thus to trifle in eternal affairs than in temporal; in the church, than in the state; in the court of God, than of the king? Less criminal and profane *in the name* of the sacred Trinity, to declare a man *to be* forgiven, who *may not be* forgiven; or, in other words, to call God to record for the *truth of that*, which (perhaps) is all the while a *gross falsehood*? — No longer let us wonder, that *cries of priestcraft* are poured in such loud volleys upon our church, as seem to shake its very basis, and portend it — no good. — I add,

IV. Another absurdity in this dangerous and delusive form is, that though the confession be but *special*, the absolution is *general*. If his conscience be troubled with any weighty matter, he is to make a *special confession*, and this procures him a *general pardon*; he is absolved from *all* his sins. But by what logic, or from what scripture is this inference drawn, that a contrition for *some sins*, shall obtain forgiveness of *all sins*? Or, that my acknowledging to the priest some particular great crimes, for which my conscience troubles me, shall get the full remission of all the many errors and iniquities of my whole life?

Well, — but the sick man dies, — he lived a vicious and debauched life, was a known drunkard, adulterer: — But when his last sickness came

came, he trembled at the thought of death; sent for the priest, confessed his sins, and desired to be absolved: The priest, by *authority committed to him*, in the most solemn form of words the wisdom of men or angels can devise, even in the *name of the Father*, &c. pronounces and declares him absolved from all his sins. The unhappy person thus dead,—comes now to be *buried*. Here the priest, in the face of a vast croud, who well knew the man's wicked life, (yea, though he gave not the least sign of repentance in his last moments, and was known by them all not to have given it, but was cut down, perhaps in the very act of some enormous villainy; notwithstanding all this, the priest before them all solemnly declares, *That God hath taken to himself the soul of this our dear brother*,—gives him hearty thanks that it hath pleased him to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world;—and prays, *that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him (Christ) as our hope is, this our brother doth*. What now must the attending croud think of all this? If they think at all, it must be either,

First, that what the priest hath said is true, and may be depended on as the *word of God*, whose ambassador he is supposed to be; and if so—my neighbour, notwithstanding the debauchery in which he lived is now in a safe state. —There is no such need of *virtue* to prepare a
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man for the future world, as preachers, yea, as our priest himself is wont to tell us.—Remission may be had in this world, and salvation in the other without breaking off my sins. If I can but in my last moments confess them to the priest, he is *authorized* by the *holy trinity*, to grant me full forgiveness.—I shall have peace, therefore, though I go on to add *drunkenness to thirst*; and, however vicious my life be, may have hope in my death that I shall *rest in Christ*, as the priest declares, he hopes *this our brother doth*. Thus must a man reason, if he *believes* what the priest says. But,

Secondly, If these pretensions and expressions be examined but by common sense, they appear to be all a *solemn farce*, a *shocking and gross delusion*; a dangerous encouragement to careless and immoral living; subversive of holiness, righteousness, temperance, &c. *i. e.* of the kingdom of Christ on earth; and calculated to advance the power of priests, and to stupify and enslave the consciences of men.—It is a public declaration of the priest, that he hopes for *that* which, in many cases, 'tis impossible he should hope for.

Vic. I have attended patiently your long discourse, not that I greatly needed its conviction; for I believe there are few amongst our *wise* and *thinking* clergy, whose sentiments on these points much differ from yours. But what shall we do? —The law prescribes and we must obey. Both
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the cases you mention, have often given me great uneasiness, especially the latter, the office of burial. Two of our great archbishops *Sancroft* and *Tillotson*, freely declared against it. The former acknowledged he never took any cure of souls upon him, thro' his dissatisfaction with that office.—And as tho' the rubric was not enough to pin us down to its constant and invariable use in every other case besides those it excepts, the canon comes after, and absolutely requires *, *That no minister shall refuse to bury any corps that is brought to the church or church-yard in such manner and form, as is prescribed in the book of common-prayer; i. e. any one but those who die unbaptized, excommunicated, or have laid violent hands on themselves. And if he shall refuse it, except the party deceased were denounced excommunicated majori excommunicatione, he shall be suspended by the bishop of the diocese from his ministry for three months.* So that if a man were shot dead in an attempt to rob or murder his neighbour, or to break into his house, or in ravishing his wife; yet when brought to be buried, we must thank God that he hath taken to himself, &c. and profess our hope that he rests in Christ.

Gent. Truly, Sir, your case is extreamly hard:—I think your consciences deserve relief, much more than the insolvent debtors: And as I have the honour to be a member of the house of
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* Cant. 68.

commons, I would to my utmost promote a bill for that purpose. 'Tis a reproach to the honour, and manifestly tends to corrupt the morals of our nation, and to banish all faith and integrity from amongst us, to force our clergy to subscribe articles they do not believe, and to address *the divine majesty* in forms they do not approve, but inwardly condemn. It cannot but grate upon a generous and brave mind to be thus *shackled and pinned down*. — Much more must it gall the spirit of a *well-instructed christian*, who is the *Lord's freed-man*; one whom Christ hath set free from all human authority in matters of religion; and hath *commanded to call no man master but himself*. Why do you not petition to the parliament for relief?

Vic. To be free, Sir,—there is so much bigotry and superstition amongst the clergy themselves, and so afraid are they, that, if a single pin of the ecclesiastic frame be pulled out, the whole hierarchy will be demolished, that no petition of this kind can be ever expected from them. No; but as the king and parliament of England are the only proper fathers and governors of our church, to them alone it belongs to consider and redress these matters of complaint.

Gent. I shall heartily encourage an attempt of this kind, being fully convinced that the circumstances of our church greatly require it. A spirit of freedom and enquiry is gone forth into the present

present age. Nothing but what has *reason* or *scripture* to support it, will now pass for *sacred*: Yea, every ceremony and claim in matters of religion, which is not thus supported, will pass for *farce* and *solemn mockery* with men of virtue and sense; and as 'tis only amongst *such* that true religion can flourish, nothing can more concern us than to approve our established doctrines and forms of worship to them. Let me tell you an occurrence not quite foreign to the present subject. I was lately in a full room of gentlemen of good sense, when the following article was read aloud from the common Newspaper.—*The right reverend father in God, the Lord bishop of —, yesterday set out for a remote parish of his diocese, to consecrate a piece of ground for the enlargement of its church-yard, the antient limits being too narrow conveniently to receive their dead*—It would have grieved a good churchman to see the unbelieving smile it raised over all the room.—And cannot their lordships *make holy water*, says one, as well as *holy ground*? Methinks there should be nought in one element which makes it more difficult or unapt for consecration than another. Heaven, no doubt, has empowered them for *both alike*; and one would imagine it as much for one's soul's health, to have the body when living bedewed often with *holy water*, as when dead to lie perishing in holy earth.

In former ages, replied another, when mystery and superstition reigned in awful silence, such a solemn farce might have been acted without much offence. Deluded people might flock to see the wonderful transformation of *unholy* into *holy* ground, and reverence the man that made it; but in the present age of light, such a monkish device cannot lift up its head without drawing upon itself abundant ridicule: The most ignorant of the common people can hardly treat it with decency, and forbear laughing out. —I wish our bishops would be very sparing in such parts of their sacred function; lest whilst they consecrate church-yards, they unconsecrate themselves: If they dignify these holy plats, 'tis with the spoils of their own characters; and, however sacred they make the ground, they make themselves extremely *mean*.

A third gentleman observed, to what mischievous and mad purposes this *false* notion of *holiness* had been applied by crafty priests. Tithes are *holy*: No government, therefore, without great sin, can touch them, or alienate the least tittle of them. 'Tis sacrilege, 'tis abomination, for lay-impropriators to finger this sacred treasure; and sooner or later these robbers of *holy church* may expect—vengeance upon them. The church's walls are *holy*; 'tis the temple and house of God. *Palestine* is an *holy* land; that such sacred ground therefore should not be polluted

luted by *Saracens* and *Turks*, the holy fathers of the church, in the space of four years, sent over 600,000 of their dear children to wrest it from them, who all died sacrifices upon it, and afresh consecrated it with their blood. Yea, above two millions of christian lives from first to last, fell in this enthusiastical and mad attempt. That compleatest *system of villainy* that ever oppressed the earth, calls itself, and by many ages and kingdoms has been reverently acknowledged, as the *holy catholic church*. Yea, that liveliest image of hell itself, the *Court of Inquisition*, its *officers, tribunal, &c.* are all HOLY; even its very jails are consecrated places, they are *santa casa*, holy prisons. Whither will not the superstition and wantonness of priests hurry them, if not curbed by lay-discretion? It looks as if the infernal powers were sporting themselves with human sottishness, and trying to what depths of stupidity they could sink them. We laugh at the Egyptians for worshipping leeks and garlic, and holding cats and oxen in religious veneration: But will not after ages more justly laugh at us, for consecrating stones and timber, and paying a religious regard to houses and plats of ground?

Vic. Not religious regard neither; that would make it idolatry.

Gent. As to its idolatry, look you, Sir, to that; —but that the regard paid is *religious*, admits
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but of little doubt : you will not call it *civil*. 'Tis set apart by a *religious officer*, for a *religious purpose*, with *religious solemnity*, by prayer, &c. No merely *civil* person is able thus to consecrate an house or piece of ground ; no merely *civil* person (*i. e.* no one who is unbaptized or excommunicated from the *christian church*) hath right to lie in this holy ground ; 'tis therefore a *religious*, not a *civil* regard, which is paid to our churches and their yards. And why it is not as great stupidity for *christians* to pay religious respect to a *plat of earth*, or an house, as for Egyptians to pay it to an *ox* or a *cat*, I profess I cannot see ; of the two, methinks the latter is much the most excusable. There is some image of deity, there is *life* in these ; in the other there is none.

And as you have mentioned *idolatry*, you will give me leave, Sir, to ask, why is image or idol-worship so offensive to God, and so strictly forbidden ? Is it not chiefly, that it weakens men's belief of *the omnipresence* of the deity, and represents him as *confined* more to one place than another ? This, God resents as derogatory to his honour, and injurious to the cause of virtue and true religion : And yet, what is that *bowing* towards the *altar* and the *East*, which is practised amongst us, but a dangerous approach towards this popish and pagan worship ? For when the congregation are taught

to turn about from the *west* or the *south*, and devoutly worship towards the *East*, how natural is it for them to think that the God whom they worship is *more present* THERE, than in any other quarter; for if he were not *more present* THERE, why should they thus solemnly and constantly turn towards it? But, if this practice tends to cherish such wrong apprehensions in the common people (who in all ages and all countries have been too prone to debase and confine the divine majesty in their conceptions of him) I shall not stick to pronounce it a very dangerous advance towards idolatry and image worship. From worshipping *towards* the altar, 'tis but too easy to pass to the worshipping *the altar* itself. Our learned clergy know, that in some such manner as this, the worship of images at first slid into the church; and from so small a beginning, that enormous corruption which now overspreads so vast a part of the christian world chiefly arose.

Vic. I own, Sir, the justness of your remarks, and can only say that I wish, and am certain multitudes of my brethren join heartily in the wish, that our liturgy were revised; its exceptionable passages amended or expunged; that *indifferent* things were left *indifferent*; that no other terms were made necessary to *christian communion* than *Christ* hath made necessary; and that none of the *Lord's ministers* should be constrained

strained to deny the *Lord's table* and the *Lord's bread*, to those whom at the same time they verily believe to be the *Lord's faithful and accepted servants*, and to belong to his household of faith.——'Till the things you have now remarked on, and some others that might be mentioned, are set right, our church can never hold up its head with boldness. Infidels will laugh, will teize and insult; and from the absurdity of some established doctrines and forms of worship, draw prejudices and cavils against christianity itself.

Those who dissent from her will too justly retort upon her the heinous sin of *schism*, she has long branded them withal; in as much as by her *unscriptural* rites she makes a grievous rent or division in the christian church, *rejecting* those whom Christ *receives*; and casting out from her communion those whom she must believe to belong to the communion of saints, and to be real members of Christ.

Gent. To speak freely, Sir, to me it seems manifest, that a church so unequally poised with the *weight* of immense revenues and grandeurs on one hand; and with the *lightness* of superstitious forms and enormous claims on the other, can never be *well established*; it carries the principles of dissolution in its very frame —— Its *honours* and *wealth* will keep *many*, no doubt, attached firmly to its interest: But—may it not

be feared, that in some future age the first rapacious hand that shall find itself *able*, will seize the rich prey? That the revenues which now support it, will some time or other prove the occasion of its ruin? Like the temple of *Belus*, that once richest and most *sacred* treasure of the earth, which Xerxes destroyed, to enrich himself with its wealth. But—here is company I see coming, whose presence will put an end to our talk upon these subjects.



A
D I S S U A S I V E
From ENTERING into
H O L Y O R D E R S,
I N A
L E T T E R
T O A
Y O U N G G E N T L E M A N, &c.

From the Third Edition, printed in 1738.

DISCUSSIVE

HOLY ORDERS

LETTER

YOUNG GENTLEMAN, &c.

From the Third Edition, printed in 1780.



S I R,

THE last letter I received from you, acquainted me with your design of going into holy orders, which, I hope, is not yet put in execution; and if you will be persuaded by me, it never shall. — You may be surpris'd at this expression, especially when I tell you, that I am now from my heart serious in it. I think verily, that hitherto, during the course of our friendship, you have never had any reason to suspect my concern for your welfare: my advice, interest, and every service in my power, have always been at your command; and from what you have experienced, I assure myself that you are fully convinced, that, in all things I consult your advantage. But I must tell you, I expect no deference to my opinions, merely from that willingness and inclination I have always shown to promote your affairs; but wholly and solely to the goodness and sufficiency of the reasons I lay before you, why I

would not have you undertake the sacred employment; which I shall proceed, without any further ceremony, to offer to your consideration: Only if you can refute any thing which I alledge, do so by all means. Good reasons should of course give way to better; and believe me, that I have such a value for you, as earnestly to desire to have your conduct regulated by the best.

1. In the first place then, I cannot see the absolute necessity of the office, as far as it relates to preaching; being of opinion, that preaching the gospel does not consist in making sermons, or explaining texts. — This is, indeed, now the chief, as well as the most gainful branch of the ministerial duty; and if a man has the happiness of a clean delivery, or a good knack, as some people call it, he rarely fails of making his fortune in the church. But the business seems to me to be superseded by the publication of the gospels and epistles. After these were written and dispersed abroad, the evangelists part was performed, where they were received, and so ceased of course. — To preach the gospel in the scriptural sense, is, to acquaint the world that Christ is come, and the purposes he came for. — This affair needs not many words, is very plainly told by the writers of the New Testament; the meanest understanding may comprehend it. — Where this is known,

known; enough is known.—We stand in no want of such a number of preachers, lecturers, &c. The divine authors are either plain and perspicuous, or not. — If they are not so, to what end were they written? If they are, to what purpose such multitudes of licensed interpreters?—Here is no need of you.—We are already stocked with persons enough, whose only business it is to tell us the same thing over and over again.—It would be better if it were not done with such great uncertainty and variation. — In short, 'tis just as one says, “ As if a husbandman
 “ should once tell his servants what they are to
 “ do, when to sow, when to reap; and after-
 “ wards one should come and tell them, twice or
 “ thrice a day, what they know already.—You
 “ must sow your wheat in *October*.—You must
 “ reap your wheat in *August*.”

2. But should I, in the next place, allow that the office may perhaps be of some service to mankind, especially to the illiterate and such as cannot read.—Nevertheless, as the negligence of the ordainers is such, and their enquiries into the qualifications of the young persons they suffer to be admitted into the ministry, so trivial and very superficial; I am much afraid it may appear to have more bad than good consequences.—What raw, indigested stuff have I not heard from pulpits? What absurd expression! Quaint metaphor! and monstrous violation of the sa-

cred text! What pains have I seen several persons take, (and those not always young clergymen neither, but sometimes such as have been in orders some years, and beneficed in this town) I say, what pains have I seen them take to misquote and misapply passages from sacred scripture, thro' a long heavy discourse; the major part of which has been nothing to the purpose?

Nay, this is far from being the worst of the case.—I have not only heard very frequently very bad language, much inconsistency, scripture put to the rack.—

*But that's no news to the poor injur'd page,
It has been used as ill in every age—
And is constrain'd with patience all to take;
For what defence can Greek and Hebrew make?*

Dryden.

—I have not only been witness to all this—but to my surprize and astonishment, have heard positive duties preferred to those of moral and eternal obligation.—Trifles made necessary terms of salvation.—These wrong explained, and clogged with the accession of very dubious, very uncertain points.—And lastly, the doctrines of men more strongly and vehemently insisted on, than the commandments of God.

Hence of course the people, whose souls are committed to such instructors, are sure to be confirmed

confirmed in ignorance, bigotry and superstition.—The misfortune is, these creatures are not a few neither, and generally the most conceited and most forward. You will always find such the most noisy, and the most blustering; whilst the truly learned are ever modest and diffident.—And the wordy, bullying pretensions of the former, seldom fail of taking the vulgar.—Whilst the real merit, and just sense of the latter, will only have effect upon such as themselves.

Hence too, from the ignorance and bigotry of the clergy, springs what they call *heresy*; which is, indeed, generally speaking, only another word for *truth*. For as their ignorance makes them bigots, so their bigotry chains them down to ignorance; by which means they are sure to move perpetually in this dark circle. And when any man of sense, either of their own function, or among the laity, speaks or writes in defence of truth and sound religion, he is sure to be honoured with the title of *heretic*. They would go further, if their hands were not tied up—for persecution hath the same origin likewise.

If you have a mind to see the genealogy on both sides, it is soon drawn for you:

Ignorance,	}	{	Knowledge,
Bigotry,			Freedom,
Superstition,			Modesty,
Persecution.			Moderation.

So that as I would not have you set up for a preacher, because the business is done to our hand; so neither would I have you one, because there are too many already: I know your ingenuity and good parts, and am much afraid you would be apt to be in the right; which I am certain, is too dangerous a thing for a man of your fortune.

That I am not singular in this sentiment, I could show from the writings of some of the greatest divines. — But I shall content myself with two passages from bishop *Burnet*. — In his preface to the *Pastoral Care*, p. 15, he thus frankly acknowledges the matter: And whereas the understanding of the scripture, and an application to that sacred study, was at first the distinguishing character of protestants; for which they were generally nick-named *Gospellers*: These holy writings are now so little studied, that such as are obliged to look narrowly into the matter, find great cause of regret and lamentation from the gross ignorance of such as either are in orders, or that pretend to be put in them.”

And again, the body of his book, p. 56, — Men run to orders as to a subsistence, or the means of procuring it; and seem to have no other sense of that sacred institution, than mechanics have of obtaining their freedom in that trade or company in which they have passed

“ passed their apprenticeship. It were indeed,
“ happy for the church, if those who offer
“ themselves for orders, had but such a sense of
“ them as tradesmen have of their freedom;
“ who do not pretend to it till they have fi-
“ nished the time prescribed, and are in some sort
“ qualified to set up in it.—Whereas, alas!
“ men who neither know the scripture, nor the
“ body of divinity, who have made no progress
“ in their studies, and can give no tolerable ac-
“ count of that holy doctrine, in which they de-
“ sire to be teachers; do yet, with equal de-
“ grees of confidence and importunity, pretend
“ to this character, and find the way to it too
“ easy, and the access of it too free.”

But the preaching part does not only seem to me, to be in a manner useless, very negligently provided for, and worse performed; but another, and that a much more essential branch of the ministerial duty, as at present managed, is far from being free from objection.—In public forms of prayer (as indeed in all public forms whatever) it is requisite some person or persons should have the chief administration, and be the mouth of the people.

But, I am afraid, that, upon examination, we may find such things tacked to our liturgy, which may cause some judicious persons to think, that the words put into the mouth of the people, are turned either into folly or sin.

Some

Some do not stick to say, that it is an odd jumble of devotion and creeds, and seems more designed to initiate us into the private whims and fancies of a few divines, than to make us pious and humble before God.—To what purpose else, say they, the three creeds; one of which is—and—which nevertheless, by the tenor of it, you are obliged to believe, under pain of damnation.—Another, the Nicene, hath been already the occasion of tumult, quarrel, bloodshed, schism, and persecution; and yet our wise churchmen have hoarded it up as a jewel, and placed it in the most sacred part of the office; as if no man should be allowed to receive the eucharist, who would not first swallow this bitter pill.—With the apostle's creed most parties amongst christians are pretty well contented.—It is modest, reserved, and less explicate.—Men are left to their own sentiments, and not forced to join in the old wives fables, and fairy-tales of nurses and monks.

Nay, they say roundly, that they can't perceive what occasion there is for any creed at all in offices of this nature: Nor why all christians may not unite in prayer, though differing in some particular articles of faith.—When the disciples asked our Saviour to teach them to pray, he did not require them to repeat their belief—but dictated a plain formulary, conceived in words, short, and suitable to human wants.

It is supposed, that if we apply to God through Jesus Christ, with humility, a sensibility of our necessities, and his goodness, willingness, and power to relieve us, that our prayers will not be ineffectual. — Nor can the most rigid among the orthodox, take upon him to assert, that the petitions of a well-disposed heart, with the qualifications just mentioned, will be rejected by God, tho' not so much as the apostle's creed were inserted in the liturgy.

But it has ever been the conduct of the gown, to take hold of every opportunity of making parties in religion; by these means they are sure of finding some zealots, and then the strongest side carries away all the preferments. And it is something worth taking notice of, that amidst all the various skirmishes and battlings which have happened among these church-militant dragoons, no not the least inclination towards an overture has ever been shown by them, but they fight it out *usque ad internecionem*. And it hath always been as dangerous to endeavour to part them, as to attempt the same between man and wife in their matrimonial squabbles; they both fall upon the mediators, and knock them on the head. — Thus the passions of men are kept up, and their quarrels perpetuated from age to age; the strongest party runs away with all the benefices, divides the spoil among themselves — claps a mark of infamy on the opposite side, widens the breach,

breach, and renders all treaties absolutely impracticable.

I say, therefore, in a few words, that beliefs, doxologies, articles of faith, private senses of a few churchmen, should never be dragged into books of public devotion,——they are only so many watch-words; and such practices are more intended to excite our zeal for them, and their opinions, than to cherish proper ideas of the deity; to stir up the spirit of feud, faction, and disturbance, than to promote that of meekness, peace, and piety.

And if those who are in authority won't endeavour to destroy this train, which is laid for us of the laity, we ourselves should, however, take care it does not blow us up.

We have not a few of the clergy on our side, and they are not the least discerning among that reverend body, who would be glad to see things thus accommodated; and, if they are wrong, why should they not be set to rights? As the young clergyman, being to read the office of baptism, which runs, “Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all “men are conceived, and born in sin.”—Apprehending this, I suppose, to be absurd and false; read it thus, “Dearly beloved, forasmuch as ’tis “conceived that all men are born in Sin.”——

A very good emendation—tho’, as one says, ’twas a good way to persuade men to be christened, to tell them that they had a foulness about them, *viz.*

original

original sin, that could not be washed away but by baptism.

4. But there is still something else beyond all this.——There are certain tests of truth and error, which must be subscribed before you can receive ordination: I mean the thirty nine articles of religion, which, for avoiding all ambiguities, is to be performed in this form and order of words: “ I N. N. do willingly, and *ex animo*, subscribe, “ that all and every the articles, in number nine “ and thirty, besides the ratification, are agree- “ able to the word of God.”——I am persuaded that a person of your ingenuous disposition would be fully convinced that the said articles were agreeable to the word of God, ere you would set your hand to them as such——and that, if you were suspicious that so small a matter as one clause in them was contrary to scripture, you would withdraw your pen, and not suffer it to perform the guilty sign.——I know you can’t think, without horror, upon making falsifications, suppression of divine truth, and prostitution of conscience, the first step of admission into the sacred order.——If you please, therefore, we will revise them——The title runs thus, “ Articles agreed upon by “ the archbishops, and bishops of both provinces, “ and the whole clergy in the convocation holden “ at London in the year 1562, for the avoid- “ ing of diversities of opinions, and for the esta- “ blishing of consent touching true religion.”

I must

I must own, that I am not highly pleased with this method of *establisbing consent touching true religion*, because I am apprehensive that it is not the most proper way to avoid *diversities of opinions*. Are the clergy to this day, notwithstanding they have all, and all along subscribed them, better agreed? Are they of one mind yet? Have we had no dispute upon some of these very articles, which were designed to hinder all disputes? — Yes, we have — and those maintained too by some of the most learned and best of that order — and that very justly — for *true religion* can never be established by *consent*, but by *debate*. There is something so lazy in the thought, that none but the tranquil gown would ever have hit upon. — Truth is the reward of application, and labour; the bold man who dares to make her the object of his wishes, must not sit dreaming in a cell, but must be active and vigorous: She'll play him as many wily tricks as a *Fox* — sometimes pursued at a distance, sometimes near, then kennelled; then again, perhaps, in full view; nor to be won at last but by a long chace, and venturing the neck for.

What can be the reason why the clergy should fall upon this method of *articling* with their novices? Should fetters be clapt upon the mind? or should it be free to pursue its own conclusions? Are religion and truth two different things, that if truth should come out, religion must fail? And how

how shall truth appear but by disquisition, parley, and dispute? What matter to them on which side she is found?—be she but found.—Are not all mankind as much concerned in her as they? Why then these hedges and inclosures, where every man has *right of common*?

Such practices not only hinder the propagation of truth, but are the causes of vile prevarications and hypocrisy.——Men that come into the church, unless their sentiments are conformable to those of the articles, which, by the writings of the clergy, and the turn of the age, seem to be very few in number, must be guilty of such dishonesty, as a man of probity would blush to mention.

Strange! that the first step of a preacher and enquirer after truth, should be to sign, in his own apprehension, a rank falshood.——Thus, under pretence of guarding and securing true religion, a practice hath been introduced, which puts religion to an open shame, and blurs the face of truth.——The clergy are, at length, caught in their own toils; they have shackled themselves; they can't refuse, if they will undertake the office, nor defend it when they have done.—I don't speak of the unthinking and illiterate part of them—but of the men of sense and learning.—The former perform subscription without any guilt, because they know no better.—They never think for them-

themselves; the articles, therefore, are to them a very good scheme of religion.

But are all the men of sense and learning among the clergy, Athanasians? And who but such can honestly put their hands to the *first, second, fifth, and eighth* articles? How few think this proposition true, that *original sin is the fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, &c. and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation?* though all subscribe it as truth.—How small is the number among them that believe, *That the condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God?* Of how many is it the persuasion, *That works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, &c. but have the nature of sin?*

Or, are the clergy now-a-days of Calvinistical principles, according to the meaning of the seventeenth article? Yet they own these as truths.—What can the laity think, but that these persons (who with so much ease and quietness, solemnly profess propositions true, which they are convinced are false, merely for the sake of the preferment of the church) would, for the sake of greater gains, subscribe

subscribe to any other thirty-nine propositions you can bring them?

As to you, Sir, if you can, with a safe conscience, perform this part, do it in God's name. If in your apprehension they are true, in the plain and fair meaning of the words, without racking and torturing the perverse sense to force it to speak your own, you may do it very honestly, and without a crime.

But if you are drove to the necessity of making use of artifice, quibbling, palliation, and wire-drawing, let it entirely alone; be not partaker of these mens sins.—Conclude it dishonest to seek for any further reasons to subscribe the articles, but the reasonableness of the articles themselves.—For 'tis certain, that he who begins with a lie, may be sent by the father of lies; but he cannot be thought to enter in by the door, who prevaricates in the first word that he says, in order to his admittance.

5. But in the next place, if, after enquiry, you may frankly approve of, and embrace the tenets and doctrines of the church of England, and look upon the arguments which the libertinism of the age hath contributed to furnish against her purity, as frivolous and inconclusive—and therefore are desirous to offer yourself to the approbation of your superiors, to be invested with that dignity.—Though you have got over these difficulties, may there not be some still lurking behind, which
may

may give you equal perplexity? For though you approve this set of propositions now, whilst you are young—are you sure that more mature reflection and extent of reading may not alter your sentiments upon this head.—If you come only thus far to be once doubtful of the truth of them, can you suffer yourself to renew your subscription?—Yet this must be done upon every fresh acquisition of benefice. But hold! I have mentioned the word *benefice*—which makes me recollect, that, to the best of my knowledge, you are not acquainted yet with any person in whose power it is to confer one upon you.—You have no interest with my lord chancellor, or any of the bishops or dignitaries of the church.—You can only propose, therefore, to serve in the first place as a curate, till your merit shall cause you to be taken notice of, and raise you higher.

You little know, my young friend, what a small pretence merit hath in the world to its good graces.—You had much better place your hopes upon some other qualification.—Had you the volubility of tongue, good hard features, not soon disordered; could you be a staunch party-man, vent and defend these notions in all places, public or private, in coffee-houses and taverns, before any body, properly or improperly, no matter which: could you mount a pulpit without any sense of the audience, stand erect, and thunder out an orthodox discourse, care not a rush whether
sense

sense or nonsense: Or, could you rail loudly against any worthy eminent divine, who had unluckily dropt more truth than he should, you might soon raise friends: This conduct would soon get you a living, or a lectureship at least, in the city—or a scarf, perhaps, at t'other end of the town.

But only merit, bashful merit, to befriend you, is the worst friend in the world.—How long may you trudge through thick and thin to burials and christenings, before any body becomes sensible of your capacity to adorn a much higher station?—Then, as a curate of a parish, you must expect to undergo many things which you won't find very agreeable.—If an old woman has the tooth-ach, and can't sleep a-nights, you are sent for in as much haste, as if she was departing that moment, to pray by her. If a child is a little out of order, you are called for at midnight to baptize it, lest it should go into the other world without a name.

When you come among the merry gossips, if you can't hear with patience their idle tittle-tattle, tell broad tales, talk pretty plainly of you know what—kiss every toothless dame, down to the very nurse; you'll never gain any reputation in your parish.

If at any of these places there are any perquisites or vales to be got—your master steps in before you, and condescends to do the duty himself;

but gives you the liberty to go every where, when he knows your labour will be rewarded with pains.

If he has any other church any where else, he will do you the honour of sending you to preach for him, when he pleases to have nothing to do; and though he hath, perhaps, a guinea a sermon, you must not expect a sixpenny piece of it. If you are a better preacher than he, you'll raise his envy. It will be no small crime to please the parish better than himself.—You will quickly find he will begin to look cold upon you.—You won't be sent for so often to smook a pipe, drink ale, and play at back-gammon with him. If you should, therefore, have the courage to undertake this business, and should be placed in such a post as this, remember to conceal your good parts: Be, if you can, some degrees more dull than your superior: fish out his sentiments, and whether consistent or not, be sure profess the same. Imitate him in all things, especially in his diversions. Take great care never to shew your learning; let all such heathenish things as Latin and Greek be put far away from you: Not the least mention of the classic authors, for your life. By these prudent means, you may, perhaps, in time, arrive to be as considerable a person in the parish as the doctor's man.

You must never imagine, that because you are both of the same order, and vested with the
same

same power, therefore you are his equal. He considers you as his journeyman. You are hired to read prayers in a morning, when he's a-bed; —to give him a comfortable nap, when he is inclined to take one, at church; to visit the sick, which *whisk* may prevent him from doing; and to stand freezing in a cold church-yard, that he may, with the less interruption, put the bottle about. These offices duly and truly performed, you are intitled to a salary of, perhaps, thirty pounds a year; which he'll wonder how you can consume, though his yearly expences run out the value of two livings and a prebend. — He'll tell you, that you have nothing in the world to do but to study, and make yourself a great man. So you might, indeed, if it were not for two hindrances; — money to buy books, and time to read them; for your thirty pounds exhibition may not, perchance, be near so regularly paid as his five hundred. And as for interruption, you may expect as much knocking at your door, as at a midwife's. Furnished with so great conveniences, no doubt, you'll prove an able divine, and an excellent scholar! Deists and heretics can't stand before you.

You may wonder that your patron proves so bad a paymaster, when he hath so much coming in; and so may all those he hath to deal with. —

But a dignified man is not kept at a small expence. It is comprehended in the very definition of him,

that he feeds high, and gets children as fast as fly-blows:—Then, pray consider seriously, what it is to treat *four jolly chaplains*: Then, there are visits to and from the bishop, to the dean, to the prebendaries, whose names would make a private gentleman's estate sink at the very sound of them. Lastly, consider the annual expence of subscriptions to the works of the eminent clergy——as well as what is given in *charity to ministers in poverty and distress*; which last two articles, no doubt, amount to something considerable. These things reflected on, you won't be surpris'd if it should be half a year before you receive your first quarterly allowance.

Give me leave to observe to you, likewise, that in such a situation as this, you must not expect to be treated with much ceremony; nor take upon you to be very free of your tongue, or pretend to be out of humour, if you are interrupted. This is your birth-right as a curate; be your sentiments ever so just, your words ever so proper, your behaviour ever so genteel, they are all lost and thrown away: your condition sinks you into contempt and insignificancy.

Among gentlemen, indeed, these qualities will pass current. Good breeding and politeness will render your conversation acceptable to such. You may be easy, familiar, and sprightly in their company, and relate your wit and humour among
them

them with applause: here you'll be caressed and loved. Gentlemen don't consider a man's fortune so much as his behaviour and abilities; and every man has a title to be treated as such among them, who demeans himself like one: then gaiety of temper, and lively turns of repartee, are certain passports to their acquaintance.

But with your Doctor these talents will prove useless; they are not to the gout of the church: He'll think them as improper as if you wore a sword over your cassock.——It will be insolent in you to talk to him as easily as you can converse with a man of breeding. He must be treated with more respect, and greater reverence. You are his servant, and in his thoughts, perhaps, one of the meanest about him; and you'll find his footman take greater liberties with him than you dare to do. Therefore there's but one way left: You must be silent, and know your distance.——A curate is not company for a beneficed man. When any of his brethren of this figure and bulk come into the room, you must go out of it; and that you may do without being espied: for you'll not be taken so much notice of. If you have philosophy enough to bear this usage, thus to stand for a cypher, a drudge, a slave, the church-doors will be open, and you may enter upon your post next ordination-sunday.

I had almost forgot one circumstance, one of the blessings attending this course of life; and

that is, you'll be delivered from the trouble of thinking for yourself——or speaking your own sentiments. You must wear a mask over your mind, and clap a padlock upon your tongue. It may be any other Englishman's native prerogative to declare the result of his own reflections, to profess and defend them, if he thinks he has reason on his side: This he imagines an invaluable happiness, and would not part with upon any consideration. Be ever so good a customer to a tradesman, he'll thank you for the money you are pleased to lay out with him; but upon an argument he is under no restraint to conceal his mind, but will express himself with all the frankness of a free-born man. Employ a mechanic, so that your work almost maintains him and his family, he confesses, indeed, that you're his very good master; but try your authority with him, to make him of your opinion——if he's not of the same before, the fellow comes to arguing, and putting of questions——and has, you'll find, so much English blood in him, that if he does not approve, you must go somewhere else to seek a proselyte.

Try the same method with your superior, and you are sent to find a new master. I don't speak now of articles of faith, but of much more indifferent matters; such as the discipline of the church, power and authority of its preachers, the use and significancy of its ceremonies, or such like

like questions. Profess your mind freely, take your own side, enter into the debate with him, the consequence will be (unless he be of the same principles) a *lettre de catchet* next morning, to pack up your awls and leave his parish; lest the *wholsome fountain of sound doctrine* be rendered muddy, by the *feculency of your damnable positions*.

But I have kept you long enough upon the miserable condition of the servile train of curates; so vile, so crouching a dependency, what generous man would undergo? Such a one would sooner chuse to dig in a mine; for then he's a slave under ground, and his shame hidden from the eyes of men; than wear this public, open badge of servitude, and go through such dirty ways likewise to put it on.

But I will suppose now, that better fortune doth attend you; that you are soon emancipated and delivered from this life of bondage. A bishop, if you please, shall find your merit out, and reward it with a good fat living in the country, in the first place,——of which I wish you joy.——Your friends all around, no doubt, will do the same.——You are now your own master; you dress out with a good gown and cassock, a scarf, a fine beaver adorned with a hallowed rose, and appear in public a very doctoral figure; you now have a warm house, the pleasant prospect of some glebe round it,——and all the parishioners for
O 3 your

your tenants, to furnish you with corn, wine, and oil.

What will be (think you) the first thoughts that arise in your mind? I will speak for you,—*you'll want a curate*;—you can't do all the business yourself;—it is too tiresome for your weak constitution;—it interrupts your studies;—or any other excuse will serve as well, when you have a mind to keep one. You'll find all your neighbours about you do the same, unless their livings are so poor, as to oblige them to personal service, which they heartily lament. What will be, imagine you, the next thought that gets uppermost? *Why, another living*, no doubt: You'll be like the rest of your brethren, to be sure; and what clergyman is there that is content with one? Don't they all keep correspondence with the bishop's secretaries, to give them notice of the next that drops? Are not their poor lordships dunned out of their lives almost? Are they not perpetually upon the spur to town? Hurrying, solliciting, fatiguing themselves and their patrons? Are not the houses of our gentry and nobility, and the palaces of our princes, besieged by them? Are they not so cunning, that tho' their porters tell twenty lies in a breath, to secure their masters persons, yet they catch them? Are bailiffs half so diligent in their vocation?

And what are the consequences of these *revere-
rend practices*? Why, in the first place, no doubt, the parish is very well taken care of; the
people

people are sufficiently instructed, exhorted, admonished, reprov'd, directed, and conducted, where the incumbent does not think fit to look after it, and the curate thinks himself bound to nothing but barely to perform offices according to agreement.

And then, in the second place, as bishop Burnet says, "Such incumbents, not content to devour the patrimony of the church, while they feed themselves, and not the flock, out of it, are so scandalously hard in their allowance to their curates, as if they intended equally to starve both curate and people; and it is to be supposed, that the people will think themselves under a very strict obligation of conscience to pay, religiously, all that is due to one, who seems to think himself under no obligation to labour for it."

You will be thought a man of very moderate desires, if you sit down contented with but two livings: Two livings will scarce give you title to the hat of a king's chaplain; a prebendary will despise you, but a dean won't know you.

You'll be reckoned a man of apostolical principles, and people will begin to suspect that your design to mind your office more than the benefice, the sheep more than the wool.—If your resolutions should be such, not to take more preferment, with care of souls, than you can in strictness answer to God and your own conscience, you'll at best be but an obscure good priest; a character,

racter, which you'll find little esteemed by those who should reward it. Besides, it will be no small breach of the rules of good manners, to set up for a greater strictness in this point than the rest of your brethren.——By these means you'll be as much pointed at as honest Will. Whiston, and as little regarded by the clergy.——Pray, look into the list of court-chaplains, of cathedral-men, and of sons-in-law to bishops: See what loads! What accumulation of preferments! How they are oppressed, and bend beneath the weight of spiritual mammon! A living in town, a living cross the water; a living in the country, an arch-deaconry, and fifty things besides.——Consult the news-papers; Who run away with all the fleeces? Who troll so reverently along in chariots? Who have the liberty to preach or sleep, just as they please, for several hundreds a year?

Observe likewise the policy of these men——Get all you can in your clutches, hold fast what you have, and let not an inch go—but for an ell.——Thus you grow considerable at court, for it may want some of the smallest places you possess to serve a young friend with, which is easily parted with upon better conditions; thus doctor you become a dean,—which you may keep with the rest till something else is required upon much better terms, and so you clap a mitre to your coach.——And here the progress shall stop for some time.

I am very much afraid therefore, that considering the number of the offenders, the corruption of

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the times, and prevalency of this vice, that you will be drawn in with the multitude to sin, — to the dishonour of Christ, and the reproach of his church.

This avarice of the clergy is now grown so insatiable, so scandalously notorious, that no man can be at all surprized the office itself should suffer by it. — How natural are the reflections which bishop Burnet relates to have heard in conversation, from several persons, upon this topic —

“ who owned to him, that nothing so much pro-
“ moted this (a disbelief of sacred matters, and a
“ profane contempt of them) as the very bad opi-
“ nion which they took up of all clergymen of
“ all sides. They did not see in them that strict-
“ ness of life, that contempt of the world, that
“ zeal and meekness, humility and charity; that
“ diligence and earnestness, with relation to the
“ great truths of the christian religion, which
“ they reckoned they would most certainly have,
“ if they themselves firmly believed it: therefore
“ they concluded, that those whose business it
“ was more strictly to enquire into the truth of
“ their religion, knew that it was not so certain,
“ as they themselves, for other ends, endeavour-
“ ed to make the world believe it was. And that,
“ tho’ for carrying on of their own authority or
“ fortunes, which in one word they call their trade,
“ they seemed to be very positive in affirming the

“ truth of their doctrines, yet they in their own
 “ hearts did not believe it, since they lived so little
 “ suitable to it, and were so much set on raising
 “ themselves by it.”

How exactly do such political priests tally with their brethren of Jewish extraction, of whom Isaiah doth not speak with much reverence, when he calls them, *watchmen which were blind, ignorant, dumb dogs, that could not bark: sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber.* Yet these lazy sparks were as covetous and insatiable as the very best among us, *for they were greedy dogs, which could never have enough: shepherds they were that could not understand.* They could, with the utmost resignation, dispense with the performance of their duty, but would not part with the tithe of a hair of their dues, so scrupulously nice were they in that point: *They all look'd to their own way, everyone to his own gain from every quarter.*

There is nothing that generally gives greater offence to good people, than a debauched and profligate clergyman.—It is shocking to meet such a one in his habit at midnight, reeling along the streets, or picking up the common women; but even such a one, vicious as he is, has more to plead in his behalf, in diminution of his crime, than the reverend doctor, who, from the height of his preferment, surveys, with spiritual pride, the walking multitude, from under the penthouse of his broad hat.

The

The one, perhaps, is a poor curate, with allowance scarce sufficient to keep body and soul together, and is just come from an alehouse, where the liquor hath proved too strong for his head, because he is seldom used to any thing better than small beer. If such a one should drink too largely sometimes, where's the wonder? It keeps him warm, and raises him for the present above his miseries. — He would live in a more reputable, elegant manner, and not sculk into every blind corner, did not the other run away with as much as would maintain five such handsomely. — One's vices are committed in private, in the night, and known to few; the other blazes abroad, and triumphs in his iniquities. — This poor wretch labours like a dray-horse, and is starved for his pains — whilst t'other sleeps in his stall, and is guilty of the worst kind of sacrilege. — One does much for nothing, and t'other does nothing for a great deal; — Which is the most worthy creature of the two? For my part, I think the poor curate. — his piccadillo's hurt only himself, and if rightly considered, will appear to be but slight offences, compared to those of that man who robs the church of its patrimony, defrauds the sheep of their pasture, and leaves thousands of souls to second-hand, hired instructors, which he half-starves into the bargain.

I am surpris'd that we have not more remonstrances against such reverend iniquity. — That the curates, and younger unbeneficed clergy don't exclaim against such preposterous practices. — Suppose they were to make a joint concern of it, go up in a body to the house of commons, and present their petition, with a list of those worthy gentlemen who are thus laden with thick clay. — Who knows but the justice of the nation might take this affair into consideration? Might they not resume some former grants from the crown, and increase poor livings with the superfluities of pluralists, and non-residents? Or, might they not lay a tax upon such, which may be applied towards the maintenance of such a number of poor, married, beggar'd priests, as this nation abounds with? Or, towards building an hospital for the reception of ancient founder'd curates, who are worn down to the stumps in the service of a worthless rector, and an ungrateful parish? altho' they are generally as good men, christians, scholars and subjects.

And now, if you please to take the last step, to rise from being a tyrant over a few curates and prebendaries, to be one over a whole diocese — you shall now, like those who lived in the last age, and those who will possess the same dignity in the next (for I can't think there are any such in being at present) be rarely found in your diocese, or at church —

church — but at the houses of our chief ministers, and in senates——where it shall be more your business to speech it in defence of their measures, than the advancement of religion: to be constant at the levee of great men, than attend the affairs of your clergy: to be taking rules for your conduct in the house, than studying to give charges to others out of it.——All shall be swallowed up in politics; fathers and councils shall now be forgotten, the church guarded by the sword, and Christ's kingdom be of this world.

You shall now hold as much preferment as you please—a bishopric—a mastership; a special good living *in commendam*, with thousands in your pockets—shall be too little for you.——Should your diocese be some hundreds of miles off the capital, there will be no great necessity that you should repair to it: Your agent shall receive your money, and you shall have it punctually paid in London, without the least trouble or fatigue to your episcopal dignity.——Though I have met with a writ full of odd contents, directed to a bishop of this kind, which I shall take the trouble of transcribing—merely to shew the nation the difference between those of ancient days, and these of modern times.—— It is intituled, *A writ to the bishop of H. to attend his flock; and if he does not, to seize his temporalities*:—it runs thus in Latin.

REX

REX episcopo Hereford' (haud venerabili patri,
 &c.) Salutem. Pastores gregibus præponuntur, ut
 diei noctisque vigilias exercendo oves famelicas in fer-
 tilitatis pascua introducant; errantes vero per ver-
 bum salutis, & verber' correctionis in unius ovilis in-
 dissolubilem unitatem conservare studeant. Sed sunt
 nonnulli (Epi') qui hanc doctrinam dampnabiliter
 contemnentes, & sua ab aliis pecora distinguere nesci-
 entes, lac, & lanam tollunt, qualiter Dominicus grex
 alatur non curantes, temporalia rapiunt, & quis in
 parochia sua fame pereat, aut periclitetur in mori-
 bus, non attendunt. Qui non pastores sed mercena-
 rii potius dici promerentur; hoc siquidem dum hiis
 diebus, ad disponendum de regni nostri præsidiis in
 partes marchie nos transferremus. In ecclesia vestra
 Herefordensi (dolenter referemus nos invenisse) quam
 adeo invenimus pastoris solatio destitutam, ut ne dum
 episcopum, sed nec officialem haberet vicarium aut de-
 canum qui quicquam spiritualitatis exercere possit in
 eadem.— Sed ecclesia ipsa quæ olim spiritualiter deli-
 ciis fluere consuevit, & canonicis qui ibidem noctur-
 nis ac diurnis officiis intendere, & opera charitatis
 exercere debent, eam deserentibus & longe negligen-
 tibus in remotis siola jucunditatis exuta cecidit in ter-
 ram viduitatis suæ detrimenta deplorans, nec est qui
 consoletur ex omnibus causis (filiis) ejus, sane dum hæc
 vidimus & consideramus diligenter pietatis aculeus
 viscera nostra commovit, & compassionis gladius inti-
 ma cordis nostri acrius vulneravit, ut tantam ecclesiæ
 matris

matris nostræ injuriam, ulterius dissimulare non possumus, nec per transire incorrectam; quapropter vobis mandamus firmiter injungentes quatenus ad ecclesiam vestram prædictam occasionibus quibuscunque postpositis, cum ea qua poteritis celeritate vos transferre curetis, commissum vobis in eadem cura pastoralis officium personaliter executur, &c. Alioqui scire vos volumus pro constanti, quod si istuc facere non curaveritis, bona temporalia & omnia quæ ad baroniam ipsius ecclesiæ pertinent, quæ donatione constat eidem fuisse collata, & quæ hætenus colligi & salvo custodiri præcipimus in commodum & utilitatem ipsius ecclesiæ convertenda cessante jam causa, in manu nostra totaliter capiamus, nec ulterius sustinebimus quod temporalia metat, qui spiritualia, ad quæ ex officii sui debito tenetur, irreverenter subtrahere non formidat, aut quod emolumenta percipiat qui incumbencia ejusdem onera subire recusat. Teste Rege apud Heref. primo die Junii anno regni sui quadragesimo octavo *.

Which is thus rendered in English.

“ The king to the bishop of Hereford, (he
 “ seems no venerable father in Christ) Greeting.
 “ — Shepherds are set over their flocks, that
 “ by watching over them night and day, they
 “ may take care the hungry sheep have plenty of

* See Bohun's English Lawyer, p. 311.

pasture,

“ pasture, and by the word of truth, and the
“ rod (staff) of correction, endeavour to keep
“ such as stray under one fold, &c. — But
“ there are many bishops, who, damnably con-
“ temning this doctrine, and not knowing their
“ own from other men’s cattle, rob them of
“ their milk and wool, they plunder them of their
“ temporals, not caring how the Lord’s flock
“ are supplied with spirituals; nor do they re-
“ gard who in their diocese may be corrupted in
“ their morals, or perish through want (infi-
“ delity) — These do not deserve the name of
“ pastors (shepherds) but rather of mercenary
“ hirelings, as in the present case, viz. When
“ we lately came hither to order the forts of our
“ kingdom in these borders, we found (’tis with
“ grief we can say, to have found) your church
“ of Hereford so destitute of all pastoral com-
“ forts, that not only her bishop was eloped,
“ but she had neither official, vicar, or dean,
“ who could exercise any spiritual function in
“ her. Nay, the church itself, which once
“ abounded with spiritual delights, [her canons,
“ formerly intent on divine offices, and acts of
“ piety, (charity) now strolling about, divest-
“ ed of their sacred habit, having deserted her]
“ was fallen to the ground, deploring the cala-
“ mities of her widowhood (i. e. the absence of
“ her

“ her bishop) nor was there any among all her
“ sons to comfort her. Oh God? whilst these
“ things we see, and intensely consider, the dart
“ of piety pierces our bowels, and the sword of
“ compassion so deeply wounds our heart, that
“ we can no longer dissemble the injuries done
“ to our mother-church, nor pass them by un-
“ corrected. Wherefore, we command you,
“ firmly injoining, that, postponing all other
“ occasions, you take care to repair, with all
“ possible speed, to your said church, there per-
“ sonally to execute your duty in the pastoral
“ charge committed to you, &c. Otherwise
“ we will have you know for certain, that if
“ you will not take care to do so, the temporal
“ goods, and all that belongs to the barony of
“ that church, which ’tis certain were conferred
“ on it by donation, and which hitherto we have
“ commanded to be collected, and safely to be
“ kept, to be converted to the profit and utility
“ of that church; the cause now ceasing, for
“ which they were given, we will take them in-
“ tirely into our own hands. Nor will we any
“ longer bear that he shall reap the temporals,
“ who dares so irreverently to substract spirituals,
“ to which he is bound, by the duty of his of-
“ fice, or that he shall enjoy the profits, of the
“ church, who refuses to discharge the duty in-
“ cumbent of the same. Witness the King at
“ Hereford, &c.”

But

But notwithstanding the care of this king, or the smartness of his writ—I can't but think it would be very hard, should any old councils, canons, capitulars, injunctions, constitutions, &c. be allowed to debar our bishops from laying hands upon what they please, when they go through so much work for it.—Not in their own function, 'tis allowed, but in affairs of a much greater consequence.—Who now expects a bishop should preach? No body; he's much better employed, we all know. That would be to do other folks offices; as if the steward of the house should execute the porter's or the cook's places.

Who can refuse them *commendams*? No body. Indeed formerly, when there was a living vacant, and no clerk to serve in it, the bishop was to keep it till he found a fit man—But is he not much wiser to keep it himself?

But to leave off this idle raillery; and to wind up my bottom seriously.

If you look upon haranguing in a pulpit to be preaching Christ: If you can agree to the use of the liturgy in all its points: if you can subscribe to the articles in their plain obvious meaning: if you can go through the drudgery of a parish, or bear the rigour of a rector: *i. e.* if you can starve and pray; if you can afterwards in your turn revenge this usage upon others: if you can in meekness and patience possess your spirit, and reverently enjoy

enjoy enough to maintain a dozen men, being sent to reap that whereon you bestowed no labour, others labouring, and you entering into their labours: In short, if you can make a downright modern priest—be one.—But if you think you shall boggle, if your conscience is squeamish, and we must have you perpetually pretending to something primitive and old-fashioned,—leave off all thoughts of this nature,—for you'll be but a scandal and disgrace to the rest of your brethren.

The End of the LETTER.



THE
BISHOP of CLOGHER's
(Dr. CLAYTON)

S P E E C H

MADE IN THE
HOUSE of LORDS,
IN

I R E L A N D;

FOR OMITTING

The *Nicene* and *Athanasian* Creeds
out of the Liturgy, &c.

On MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1756.

First printed in the Year 1756.

THE
BISHOP OF CLOGHER,
(D. CLAYTON)

S P E E C H

MADE IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

IN

IRELAND;

FOR OMITTING

The Waver and Abandonment of
out of the Liturgy, &c.

On Monday, February 2, 1756.

Printed in the Year 1756.



THE
Bishop of Clogher's SPEECH
MADE IN
The HOUSE of LORDS
IN
IRELAND.

MY LORDS,

IT has been long wished, that there could be a method found out, for more effectually uniting his majesty's protestant subjects, and for making the terms of their conformity to the established church more easy and agreeable to them.

I have, therefore, ventured to prepare a few short heads of a bill for that purpose, as I mentioned to your lordships at our last meeting; which, though they may not be sufficient to complete the work, may, at least, contribute to pre-
pare

pare and pave the way towards it. But, before I present your lordship with these heads of a bill, which I have now in my hands, I believe, it will be expected that I should say something to open and explain the purport and design of them, which consists of two parts.

The First of which is designed to rectify a mistake in the *Act of Uniformity*, passed in the 17th and 18th of king Charles II. In part of which there is an omission, which seems to defeat and contradict the very intent of the act. But, as I apprehend, that, if that part of the act was now read, your lordships would immediately perceive where the error lies; I therefore humbly move, that That part of the act may be now read. Which was read as follows:

“ Be it further enacted, by the authority afore-
 “ said, that every parson, vicar, or other minister
 “ whatsoever, who now hath, and enjoyeth, any
 “ ecclesiastical benefice or promotion, within this
 “ realm of Ireland, shall in the church, chapel,
 “ or place of public worship, belonging to his
 “ said benefice, or promotion, upon some Lord’s-
 “ day, before the first day of the annunciation of
 “ the blessed virgin Mary, which shall be in the
 “ year of our Lord 1667, openly, publicly, and
 “ solemnly read the morning and evening prayer
 “ appointed by this act to be read, by and accord-
 “ ing

“ing to the said book of *Common Prayer*, at the
 “times thereby appointed; and after such read-
 “ing thereof, shall openly and publicly, before
 “the congregation there assembled, declare his
 “unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all
 “things in the said book contained and prescribed
 “in these words, and no other:

“I *A. B.* do hereby declare my unfeigned
 “assent and consent to all and every thing con-
 “tained and prescribed in and by the book, enti-
 “tuled, *The book of Common Prayer*, and admi-
 “nistration of the sacraments, and other rites and
 “ceremonies of the church, according to the use
 “of the church of Ireland, together with the psalter
 “or psalms of David, pointed as they are to be
 “sung or said in churches, and the form and man-
 “ner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of
 “bishops, priests, and deacons.

“And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid,
 “That every person who shall hereafter be pre-
 “sented, or collated, or put into any ecclesiastical
 “benefice or promotion, within this his majesty’s
 “realm of Ireland, shall, in the church, chapel,
 “or place of public worship, belonging to his
 “said benefice or promotion, within two months
 “next after that he shall be in the actual posses-
 “sion of the said ecclesiastical benefice or promo-
 “tion, upon some Lord’s-day, openly, publicly,
 “and solemnly read the morning and evening
 VOL. III. P “prayers,

“ prayers, appointed to be read by and accord-
 “ ing to the said book of *Common Prayer*, at the
 “ times thereby appointed ; and after such read-
 “ ing thereof, shall openly and publicly, before
 “ the congregation there assembled, declare his
 “ unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all
 “ things therein-contained and prescribed.”

MY LORDS,

I now apprehend it appears to your lordships, that the intent of this part of the act was, to oblige every minister possessed of any ecclesiastical benefice, only to give his assent and consent to the use of all and every thing contained in the book of *Common Prayer*. Whereas the form of declaration prescribed by the act, in which, and no other, such minister is obliged to give his assent and consent, is so worded, as seemingly to make him give his assent and consent, not barely to the *use* of all, and every thing contained in the book of *Common Prayer*, but to the *things* themselves ; which is a very different affair, both with regard to the *dissenters* and ourselves. With regard to the *dissenters*, as it prevents those who do not approve of all and every thing contained in the *book of Common Prayer* from joining in communion with us : And with regard to ourselves, as there is a wide distance between being certain of the truth, and being certain of the falshood of some propo-
 tions ;

tions; it is no way inconsistent with the strictest honesty, for persons to give their assent and consent, for peace and uniformity sake, to the use of some particular forms of worship, either in doctrine or discipline, though they may not thoroughly approve of the things themselves, and to try to get them amended: while the public declaration of our assent and consent to the things themselves, ties down the mind from any further enquiry, and by discouraging all doubts, and inquisitive industry, puts a stop to all improvement in knowledge, or any further reformation in religion.

Whereas, at the time of the reformation, which was made in the reign of queen Elizabeth, there were so many things to be amended, that it was not consistent with the common rules of prudence to make too great an alteration all at once. The most glaring and notorious offences were, therefore, first to be removed, while common sense directed, that those which were more latent, and less visible, should be referred to a further day.

But, my Lords, I think I ought to have mentioned to your lordships, that this part of the act of uniformity, which has been now read, together with the little oath (as it has been called) by which non-resistance and an unlimited passive obedience were established by law, were added in, immediately after the restoration of king Charles II.

to the act of uniformity that was passed in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

However, it is not my design, or desire, to cast any reflections upon those persons, who thought it necessary to have these additions then made; though the private history of that transaction does not speak much to their advantage; and, indeed, what appears upon the face of the act itself, seems to confirm the report. For, though that part of the act in general, seems plainly calculated to oblige the clergy only to give their assent and consent to the use of every thing contained in the *book of Common Prayer*, yet the words, *to the use of*, are omitted out of the declaration of assent, which is prescribed to be read in churches. Which piece of fallacy, when it was first detected in England, was attempted to be rectified there, by a clause brought into the house of lords for that very purpose. But the then duke of York, who was afterwards king James II. though he could not prevent its passing that house, yet had influence sufficient to have it rejected by the commons, and did not even let it pass the house of lords without a protest.

(Immediately after the revolution, another scheme to the same purpose, together with some further concessions in favour of the *dissenters*, was projected by archbishop Tillotson and others, but which was also defeated by the bigotted zeal of the

the high-church party. I am very sensible that it was then, and is now, urged by some, that there was no need of such a clause, because the intent of the act is sufficiently plain; and that to any one who will but consult and consider the act itself, it must appear, that the declaration of assent and consent, should be only understood, as requiring our assent and consent *to the use of* all things contained in the *book of Common Prayer*, and that all penal statutes are to be interpreted, in their fullest latitude, in favour of the offender.

But, my lords, if you are pleased to consider, that the act itself is not appointed to be read in church, but only the form of declaration, out of which the words *to the use of* are omitted; then it is not to be wondered at, if they who are ignorant of the act, whether laity or clergy, should be deceived thereby; and should not imagine, that the form of declaration, which they hear read by virtue of the act, was inconsistent with the intent of the act.

To prevent, therefore, all mistakes of this kind for the future, the alteration, which is proposed to be made on this head, is only to insert the words, *to the use of*, in the form of the declaration, after the same manner as they now stand in the body of the act. Which, as it is doing no more than what common honesty, and common

justice, seem to require, I therefore think will not be disagreeable to your lordships.

The Second thing proposed in these heads of a bill, is *to lessen the number of our creeds*. I believe it will be allowed, that the creed, commonly called the apostles creed, contains all the fundamental articles of the christian faith, which are generally necessary to salvation. I believe, it will be likewise acknowledged, as a piece of political prudence, that all the articles in every established national creed, in order to prevent unnecessary schisms and divisions in the church, ought to be as few, short, plain, and fundamental as possible. I believe it will also be allowed, by all protestants, that nothing ought to be inserted in our creeds as a rule of faith, but what is plainly and clearly revealed in the holy scriptures: as that is the basis on which the reformation of our religion from popery is founded.

And now, my lords, if these propositions, which I have here advanced, be true, and in my opinion they are, indisputably, I desire to know what we protestants have to do with the Nicene creed?

The Nicene creed, as far as it differs from the apostles creed, is nothing else but the determination of a number of bishops in the fourth century, on a dispute started in the church of Alexandria,

con-

concerning a metaphysical point of theology, not plainly revealed in the scriptures; which the Nicene fathers themselves thought of so little consequence to the generality of christians, that it was not ordered to be taught the catechumens, nor even so much as to be read in the churches, till it was, some centuries afterwards, appointed by the church of Rome to be read at the communion-service.

In which church, where the pope, in council, is acknowledged to be infallible, there is some pretence for binding the consciences of men to the belief of articles that are of human invention. But, in the protestant church of Ireland, which acknowledges no infallibility in any decisions, except those of the Old and New Testament, it seems to be an absurdity to have any doctrine established as a rule of faith, which is not plainly and clearly revealed in those sacred writings.

Whereas the strongest abettors of the Nicene creed do not so much as pretend, that the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Father and Son, is to be found in the scriptures, but only in the writings of some of the primitive fathers. And, I beseech your lordships then to consider, whether it is not absolutely contradictory to the fundamental principles on which the reformation of the protestant religion from popery is built, to have any doctrine established as a rule of faith, which

is founded barely on tradition, and is not plainly, and clearly revealed in the scriptures?

I am very unwilling to say any thing to the prejudice of the Nicene fathers, or of their contemporary historians; but as the present is undoubtedly a more enlightened age, than that in which the Nicene council was assembled; and as it is the inseparable property of time, ever more and more to discover truth, to which the invention of the art of printing, as well as the reformation and revolution, have of late years greatly contributed; I think I may safely say, it seems unreasonable, that we, at this distance of time, should be tied down to their determinations.

And, as to the ecclesiastical historians of that, and the following century, this much I think myself in honour obliged to inform your lordships of, that all those books have been since destroyed, which were then published in opposition to the decrees of the council of Nice, so that all our information comes only from one side of the question. And of those histories upon this head, which have been suffered to come down to our hands, I do not know one, unless you will except Eusebius of Cæsarea, who saith but little on this subject, but what is so filled either with falsehoods, forgeries, or contradictions, that their veracity is not to be depended on.

But,

But, my Lords, suppose we should allow the Nicene fathers, and their historians, to be much more honest, and much more able men than they really were; I cannot think that the determinations of any set of men whatsoever, since the time of the apostles, on a metaphysical subject of theology, not clearly revealed in the scriptures, is the proper subject for the creed of a christian.

The great lord Bacon, in his excellent treatise on the *advancement of learning*; a work that cannot sufficiently be praised, and to which Mr. Boyle, Mr. Locke, and the great Sir Isaac Newton, owe the first rudiments of the several systems which they have since carried to so great perfection: in this wonderful treatise, wherein lord Bacon is shewing the deficiency of each species of learning, and is pointing out the errors which have prevented the progress and advancement of it; the science of theology comes, among others, under his consideration, upon which he has this remark, which, for fear of being mistaken in the quotation, I have written down, and shall beg leave to read to your lordships. “ Here, therefore, I note this deficiency, that there hath not been, to my understanding, sufficiently enquired and handled, the true limits and use of reason in spiritual things, as a kind of divine dialectic; which for that it is not done, it seemeth to me a thing
P 5 “ usual,

“usual, by pretext of true conceiving that which
 “is revealed, to search and mine into that which
 “is not revealed.”

You have now heard, my Lords, the sentiment of this great man, which is, that the searching and mining into things not revealed, under pretence of their being contained in that which is revealed, is the error which he notes in the *advancement of theology*. Accordingly, if we enquire into the event and consequence of the afore-mentioned determination in the council of Nice, we shall find, that the course of religion was thereby diverted into a wrong channel, and that christianity from thence forward, instead of being considered as a practical obligation, was changed into a speculative science; men's minds were irritated against one another, on account of niceties that were of no consequence to religion; and the doctrine of faith, or of belief in punctilio's of this kind was so magnified and extolled, as being necessary to salvation, that the righteousness of works was entirely neglected. Polemical divinity was introduced into religion, whereby the church was rendered, if I may be allowed the expression, literally militant; and the divine precept of universal love, which our Saviour recommended to his disciples, as his command, was changed into that of hatred to all who would not subscribe.

Whereas,

Whereas, had the Nicene fathers determined nothing but in scriptural terms; and had declared, that a difference of opinion concerning things not plainly and clearly revealed, was not a sufficient foundation for a breach of communion, it is more than probable, that most of those disturbances, which have since infested the christian church, might have been prevented.

As to the Athanasian creed, as that is a superstructure built upon the foundation of the Nicene creed, it is not only liable to all the objections, which can be made against that, but has also many blemishes of its own to answer for; since it has not so much as the authority of a council to support it, but is now a known forgery, detected by the criticisms of the learned Vossius, and cannot be traced within two hundred years of the time of Athanasius.

But, then, it may probably be asked, How comes it to bear the name of Athanasius? The answer to which is, because it agrees perfectly with the Athanasian doctrine; and had the name of Athanasius affixed to it by the church of Rome, because he was a person much esteemed by that church; and whose principles, as well political as religious, the members of that church have long laboured to propagate among mankind. But, as the true character of this Athanasius is not commonly known; and therefore, some of your lord-

ships may possibly be unacquainted with it, I shall beg leave to inform you who, and what he was.

Athanasius was a young, forward, petulant deacon in the church of Alexandria, of an ambitious spirit, with a talent fitted for disputation. And as he could have no hopes of getting into that bishopric, unless he could drive Arius out of Alexandria, who was the principal presbyter in that church next to the bishop; this he effected, by fomenting this dispute about the Trinity, between Arius and the bishop; on which account, having got Arius excommunicated, he had him then banished out of Alexandria. Which when done, no sooner was the old bishop Alexander dead, but Athanasius, though then only a young man of about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, by the assistance of a set of murdering Ascetics, forced himself at once into that high archbishopric, without ever passing through any of the intermediate degrees. And having gotten himself illegally consecrated, contrary to all the rules and canons of the church, he prevailed on the emperor Constantine to confirm him therein, by the power of bribes, that were given to one of the emperor's favourites. And no sooner was he thoroughly established in it, but he immediately flew in the emperor's face. And when the emperor Constantine the great was dead, treated his
son

son and successor Constantius with more contempt and insolence than could have been borne from an equal. And when he was dispossessed of his bishopric for other irregularities, by a numerous council of bishops, regularly summoned and assembled, he forced his way into that see again, more than once or twice, over the murdered corpses of his antagonists; and waded into his cathedral, thro' seas of blood.

But it may, perhaps, be further asked, Why should this recommend him to the see of Rome? The reason of which is, because this was all done by the connivance, and with the concurrence of that see: Athanasius, while he treated all the rest of mankind, and even his own royal master, with the utmost insolence, having paid a servile court to the papal chair. Insomuch that in the books of the canon-law, the first precedent that is, or can be produced, in support of the papal supremacy, is this instance of the servile submission that was paid by Athanasius to pope Julius. And therefore, I should apprehend, that all protestants, who have renounced the supremacy of the pope, and the independency of the church upon the state, ought to be for obliterating the name of Athanasius out of their liturgy, into which it was probably inserted, only with a view of recommending his political principles, under the shelter and influence of his religious doctrines.

But,

But, my Lords, suppose we should allow this creed to be no forgery, and that it had the sanction of a council to support it; there are still more objections against it, than are to be urged against the Nicene creed. For, as it searches and mines further into that which is not revealed, than even the Nicene creed does, it is so much the more faulty as a creed, which ought to contain nothing that is not plainly and clearly revealed in the scriptures.

My Lords, I desire you will be so good as to observe, that I do not take upon me to say, that the doctrine contained in the Athanasian creed is false; I only say, it is not plainly and clearly revealed. Nor, do I presume to condemn those, who think they have evidence sufficient to justify their being peremptory and positive in the support of it. I judge no man; and only say, it contains a doctrine of so nice, so disputable, and so metaphysical a nature, as is hardly fit to be treated on in the schools; but is, I am certain, by no means sufficiently revealed to be made the subject of a creed, which is commanded by public authority to be read by the minister, and repeated by the people, in the public service of the church; where the low, as well as the high, are ordered to assemble themselves; and which should be, according to St. Paul, not to doubtful disputations, but that

that they may, with one mind, and one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And suppose, my Lords, we should further allow, that the doctrine contained in the Athanasian creed may be true; can any one, nevertheless, justify those damnatory clauses, which, in a point of so disputable a nature, and of so difficult a determination, so positively assert, that every one that does *not keep this faith whole and undefiled, shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly.* And again, that *he that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.* And concludes with declaring, that *This is the catholic faith, which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.* Hard words! and seemingly unfit for the mouth of a christian and a protestant.

But, my Lords, let us now, on the contrary, only for argument sake, suppose, that the doctrine contained in the Athanasian creed is wrong; and, unless the author of it was infallible, there is a possibility that it may be so; and then let us consider what would be the consequence—I dread to name it; as it would be no less than blasphemy—For, if the Father and the Son, have not from all eternity been con-substantial, and co-equal, the assertion of that proposition would be blasphemy.

My

My Lords, I will own freely to your lordships, that it is the dread and terror of a wrong determination, in a point of so delicate a nature, that makes me solicitous for having this creed removed out of our liturgy. In a matter of such great consequence, and where the honour of God the Father is so nearly concerned, I own, that I am fearful how I put any other being, or person, upon a level with him.

The most zealous advocates for the Athanasian doctrine have, when hard pressed, been forced to allow, that there is a priority of order and dignity between the Father and the Son. Because the Father is unbegotten, though the Son is not; and the Son is said to be commanded and sent, tho' the Father is not. Now, if this priority of order and dignity does not consist in words only, but is founded in nature, and if it be allowed, that there is such a real difference between the Father and the Son, as to be a foundation in the nature and reason of things, for this priority of order and dignity, I wonder how the same persons who allow that, can possibly assert, that *in this Trinity, none is afore, or after other; none is greater or less than another.*

The distinction is at best so exceeding nice between a priority of order, and a subordination; or rather, between a priority of order and dignity, founded on the nature and reason of things, and
a pri-

a priority in existence and power, that I own it is too subtle for my comprehension. And then, I beseech your lordships to consider, whether this is a fit subject for the public service of the church.

My Lords, I fear I have already trespassed on your patience too long; but, before I sit down, I think it my duty to mention one objection to your lordships, and, indeed, the only one of any force, that I have ever yet heard, to these alterations, which are proposed to be made in favour of the *dissenters*; and that is, the fear and danger of innovations, which, when once begun, no body knows where they will end.

In answer to which, I shall beg leave to observe, that if your lordships are pleased to pass these heads of a bill, let them go where they will, or let them receive what alterations they may, your lordships, upon their return, will be still masters of them; and if you do not approve of them, you may then quash them, if you please.

But I own, my Lords, that I am under no apprehension of their receiving any disagreeable alterations, as I do not think the church is in any manner of danger under the present administration. And I am persuaded, that if my lords the bishops will but shew themselves inclined to amend, what they cannot but acknowledge is amiss, they will find the laity ready to assist and support them, rather than otherwise.

We

We see alterations and innovations frequently made in the temporal constitution of the state, and no ill consequences following from thence; and, as we have the promises of God, that he will take such care of his church, as that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, if we do but put our confidence in him, or his word, surely there is less reason to be under apprehension for the church than for the state.

I cannot, therefore, but join with the great lord Bacon in an observation, which he makes in his treatise on *church controversies*, where, addressing himself to the bishops, he has these words, “ which I shall beg leave to read to your lordships: “ Again, to my lords the bishops I say, “ that it is hard for them to avoid blame (in the “ opinion of an indifferent person) in standing so “ precisely upon altering nothing: Laws not re- “ freshed with new laws wax sour. Without a “ change of ill, a man cannot continue the good. “ To take away many abuses, supplanteth not “ good orders, but establiseth them. A con- “ tentious retaining of custom, is a turbulent “ thing, as well as innovation. A good hus- “ bandman is ever pruning in his vineyard, or “ field; not unseasonably, indeed, nor unskil- “ fully, but lightly; he findeth something ever “ to do. We have heard of no offers of the “ bishops, of bills in parliament; which, no “ doubt,

“doubt, proceeding from them, to whom it properly belongeth, would have ever received acceptance.”

And therefore, my Lords, that this objection may no longer lie against the whole bench of bishops, I take the liberty of presenting these heads of a bill. And humbly move, that they may be now received.



HEADS

HEADS of a BILL for more effectually uniting his Majesty's Protestant Subjects, and for explaining an Act, entitled, "An Act for the uniformity of Public Prayers, &c.

" WHEREAS, it appears from the words of
 " the aforesaid act, for the uniformity of
 " public prayers, &c. that the design of the assent
 " and consent, required to be read by every par-
 " son, vicar, or other minister, who hath, or
 " shall enjoy an ecclesiastical benefice or promo-
 " tion in this his majesty's kingdom of Ireland,
 " is, that they should give their unfeigned assent
 " and consent to the use of all things contained in
 " the book of *Common Prayer* :

" And, whereas the removing all unnecessary
 " doubts and difficulties, in matters of conscience,
 " may contribute not only to unite his majesty's
 " protestant subjects among themselves, but also
 " to encourage foreign protestants to come and
 " settle among us :

" We pray it may be enacted, that every par-
 " son, who shall, after the first day of
 " which shall be in the year of
 " be presented, or collated, or put
 " into any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion,
 " within

“ within this his majesty’s kingdom of Ireland,
“ shall in the church, chapel, or place of pub-
“ lic worship belonging to the said benefice or
“ promotion, within two months next after that
“ he shall be in the actual possession of the said
“ ecclesiastical benefice or promotion, upon some
“ Lord’s-day, openly, publicly, and solemnly,
“ read the morning and evening prayers appoint-
“ ed to be read, by and according to the said *Book*
“ of *Common Prayer*, at the times in the afore-
“ mentioned act appointed; and after the read-
“ ing thereof, shall openly and publicly, before
“ the congregation there assembled, declare his
“ unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all
“ things therein contained and prescribed, in these
“ words following, and no other; any thing in
“ the afore-mentioned act to the contrary not-
“ withstanding.

“ I *A. B.* do hereby give my unfeigned assent
“ and consent to the use of all, and every thing
“ contained and prescribed in and by the book,
“ entituled, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and ad-
“ ministration of the sacraments, and other rites
“ and ceremonies of the church of Ireland; to-
“ gether with the psalter or psalms of David,
“ pointed as they are to be said or sung in churches;
“ and the form or manner of making, ordain-
“ ing, and consecrating of bishops, priests, and
“ deacons.

“ And,

“ And, whereas a great variety of creeds do
 “ but contribute to confound the minds of weak
 “ persons, and to disunite protestants among them-
 “ selves: we pray it may be enacted, that in such
 “ places in the aforementioned *Book of Common*
 “ *Prayer*, where the rubric directs the creed com-
 “ monly called the Nicene creed, or the creed
 “ commonly called the Athanasian creed, to be
 “ read; the officiating minister, shall read the
 “ creed commonly called the apostles creed, in-
 “ stead thereof, and not the Nicene creed, or the
 “ creed commonly called the Athanasian creed.”

The END of VOL. III.



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